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UNSC blasts Pak over Pahalgam attack

IAF to hold drills near Pakistan border: Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Tejas to participate

UNSC members refused to support Islamabad's claims and rejected its 'false-flag' narrative **PHOTO: ANI**

NEW YORK/NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has posed sharp questions to Pakistan over the 22 April terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, which killed 26 civilians, amid growing global condemnation and escalating regional tensions.

During an informal closed-door session on Monday, requested by Pakistan, UNSC members refused to support Islamabad's claims and rejected its "false-flag" narrative. Instead, several nations questioned Pakistan's potential links to the proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba and stressed the need for accountability. Some also condemned the religious targeting of tourists in the attack.

The meeting, held in a consultative room rather than the main UNSC chamber, concluded without a formal statement, marking a diplomatic setback for Pakistan. Member states advised Islamabad to resolve issues bilaterally with India and expressed concern over Pakistan's missile tests and nuclear rhetoric, which they described as provocative.

UN Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Mohamed Khiari, who briefed the Council, said the situation remains volatile, and called for peaceful dialogue. Greek Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris, UNSC President for May, described the session as "productive". A Russian envoy added, "We hope for de-escalation."

Adding to the pressure, the Indian Air Force will conduct large-scale military drills near the international border in Rajasthan. A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued Tuesday stated the war games will begin at 9.30 pm on Wednesday and continue for over five hours. Flights from nearby airports will be suspended during the exercise. The drills coincide with nationwide civil defence rehearsals and are seen as a firm show of strength by India amid deteriorating relations with Pakistan.

India's frontline fighter jets including the Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft are set to feature in the exercise, the sources said.

In another blow to Pakistan, Lufthansa Airlines has suspended use of Pakistani airspace, citing operational uncertainty. In the course of the exercise, the IAF will simulate enemy targets on ground and in the air with deadly precision, they said.

Water levels in the Chenab River, critical for Pakistani agriculture, have also dropped sharply since India paused the Indus Waters Treaty, intensifying pressure on Islamabad.

—Agencies

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

Chenab runs dry in J&K as India shuts water to Pakistan

The water level of the Chenab River at Akhnoor in Jammu and Kashmir has fallen below waist level after closure of sluice gates at the Baglihar and Salal hydroelectric dams in Ramban and Reasi districts respectively. The sluice gates were closed following a routine desiltation operation. Officials attributed the receding water level to India's escalating tension with Pakistan after the Pahalgam attack. The Centre suspended the Indus Waters Treaty that regulated the use of the Indus river system by India and Pakistan. However, some sluice gates were reopened as the Baglihar reservoir refilled. Chenub's water level began rising later on 5 May after water was released downstream from the Salal dam.

> **India's water will be used for India's interests**
> —Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

INDIA TO HOLD MOCK DRILLS TODAY

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Nearly 300 civil defence districts, covering sensitive installations such as nuclear plants, military bases, refineries, and hydroelectric dams, will conduct mock drills as part of enhanced preparedness for hostile attacks. The exercises, set for 7 May, will focus on air-raid warning sirens, civilian training, and the cleaning of bunkers and trenches.

A high-level meeting, chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, discussed the execution of these drills with active public participation, involving students, government employees, hospital staff, and uniformed personnel. Authorities have directed that mock drills be held in all districts of Uttar Pradesh, in addition to the 19 districts identified by the central government.

The drills aim to operationalise air-raid sirens, train civilians on civil defence, and rehearse evacuation plans. Other measures include blackout protocols, camouflaging critical infrastructure, and ensuring communication links with the Indian Air Force. These drills are crucial given the growing security threats, particularly following the 22 April terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, which killed 26 people.

The government emphasises the importance of maintaining civil defence readiness in the current geopolitical climate, with participation from various civil sectors. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 3

'PM DROPPED J&K VISIT AFTER TERROR INTEL'

RANCHI, 6 MAY

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had cancelled his 19 April Kashmir visit after "receiving an intelligence report three days before" the Pahalgam terror attack last month.

He also claimed that the Centre accepted "intelligence failure" in an all-party meeting and said it should be held accountable for "not reinforcing" security arrangements in Kashmir to protect people.

"When an intelligence report says that it is not proper to visit there for your security, why did you not inform your security, intelligence, police and border force to protect people? When you got the information, you cancelled your programme but did not send more forces to protect tourists there...", Kharge alleged. "Shouldn't Centre be accountable for the loss of lives," he asked. *—PTI*

India aids nationals on death row in Indonesia

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Centre has informed the Delhi High Court that the Indian embassy in Indonesia is providing legal assistance to three Indian nationals sentenced to death for drug smuggling. Justice Sachin Datta was assured that support would continue for Raju Muthukumaran, Selvadurai Dinakaran, and Govindasamy Vimalkandhan, all from Tamil Nadu, who were convicted for smuggling 106 kilograms of crystal meth aboard a cargo vessel in July 2024. During the hearing, the Centre's counsel confirmed that prior to the court's directions on 2 May, the embassy had already begun taking steps to aid the convicts, including filing an "intent to appeal" against their conviction. The men's wives expressed urgency for immediate action due to strict limitations on the appeal process, highlighting that their husbands were the primary earners for their families. The case will be reviewed again on 4 August. *—PTI*

India ranks 130 of 190 in human development index

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India has climbed to 130th place in the 2025 Human Development Index (HDI) rankings, as reported by the UN Development Programme. This marks an improvement from 133rd in 2022, with the country's HDI value rising from 0.676 to 0.685. While health and education inequalities have shown some progress, significant income and gender disparities persist, notably in female participation in the workforce. Life expectancy has reached a record 72 years, aided by national health initiatives. The report highlights a substantial increase in Gross National Income per capita, now at USD 9,046.76. Moreover, India's emerging role in artificial intelligence is emphasised, with 20 per cent of its AI researchers choosing to remain in the country, signalling potential for innovative growth. Notably, the global outlook for human development has shown signs of stagnation, the slowest growth rate since 1990. *—PTI*

Govt notifies cashless treatment for accident victims

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Central government has officially introduced a nationwide cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims, providing up to Rs 1.5 lakh per person per incident. The scheme came into effect on 5 May, 2025, as per a notification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Victims of road incidents involving motor vehicles will be entitled to cashless treatment in designated hospitals for seven days following the accident, according to the notification. The National Health Authority (NHA) will oversee implementation, working alongside police, hospitals, and State Health Agencies.

Treatment in non-designated hospitals will only be permissible for stabilisation purposes, adhering to established guidelines. Each state or Union Territory will have a nodal agency, the State Road Safety Council, to ensure effective coordination with the NHA for onboarding hospitals and facilitating payments for treatment.

A steering committee is also set to be established by the central government to monitor the scheme's execution. This initiative follows the launch of a pilot programme on 14 March, 2024. *—PTI*

CBI court sentences Janardhana to 7 yrs jail in illegal mining case

HYDERABAD, 6 MAY

A special CBI court here on Tuesday convicted former Karnataka minister and MLA Gali Janardhana Reddy and three others in the Obulapuram Mining Company (OMC) illegal iron ore mining case after a prolonged trial spanning nearly 14 years.

The court sentenced them to seven years' imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on each.

Reddy was named accused number two. The court imposed a Rs 1 lakh fine on the company.

Soon after the judgment, the CBI took Reddy and others into custody.

The CBI court delivered the judgement based on the central agency's charge sheet against Reddy and others, accusing them of tampering with mining lease boundary markings and carrying out mining illegally in the Bellary Reserve Forest area on the Karnataka-Andhra Pradesh border.

Gali Janardhana Reddy **PHOTO:X**

The Principal Special Judge for CBI cases, Judge T Raghu Ram, acquitted ex-minister Sabitha Indra Reddy and former bureaucrat B Krupanandam in the case.

The court convicted Janardhana Reddy's brother-in-law and Managing Director of OMC, Srinivas Reddy (A1) and VD Rajagopal (A3), the then Director of Mines and Geology, Mehafuz Ali Khan (A7), Reddy's assistant.

- Jamardhana was arrested by the CBI in 2011 and released on bail by the Supreme Court after spending nearly three and a half years in prison, on 20 January, 2015.

The prosecution accused that the illegal mining between 2007 and 2009 caused Rs 884 crore to the exchequer.

Jamardhana Reddy was arrested by the CBI on 5 September, 2011 and released on bail by the Supreme Court after spending nearly three and a half years in prison, on 20 January, 2015.

The CBI, in a release after the judgment said it had registered the case on December 8, 2009 against the accused. *–PTI*

India & UK clinch trade deal; duty cut on British whisky, cars

LONDON, 6 MAY

India and UK on Tuesday confirmed the completion of a "landmark" multi-billion-pound trade deal, which locks in reductions on 90 per cent of tariff lines and is expected to add 4.8 billion pounds annually to the British economy by 2040.

For the UK, the biggest wins being highlighted are Scotch whisky tariffs set to be halved from 150 to 75 per cent and automotive tariffs set to fall from 100 to 10 per cent under a quota.

Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Keir Starmer are said to have had a "very warm" phone call to agree the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which will now go through the process of legal text formalisation to be approved by the British Parliament before it comes into force.

"Today we have agreed a landmark deal with India – one of the fastest growing economies in the world, which will grow the economy and deliver for British people and business," Starmer said in a statement.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The deal was finalised by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal during his talks with UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds in London on Friday.

According to the UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT), besides whisky and gin, tariff reductions have also been achieved on products such as medical devices, advanced machinery and lamb.

On professional visas, the UK stressed that there would be no change to the UK immigration policy except to offer a more streamlined process for business mobility. *—PTI*

5 FROM SAGAR KILLED IN TRUCK-CAR COLLISION NEAR HUBBALLI

HUBBALLI, 6 MAY

Five people from Sagar in Shivamogga district were killed in a road accident and died on the spot when the car they were travelling in collided with a truck near Ingali Cross in Hubballi taluk early Tuesday morning. Hubballi police have identified the deceased as Sweta 29; Anjali, 26; Sandeep, 26; Vithal, 55; and Shashikala, 40. The family, engaged in the hotel business, was on its way to Bagalkot for business purposes. Dharwad Superintendent of Police Gopal Byakod told Salar News that the truck driver, who was driving rashly, fled the scene after the mishap. *—Salar News*

'THOSE INSIDE RESIST OTHERS'

Reservation in India like railways: SC

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday compared reservation in the country with "a railway" or a train and said those entering the compartment "don't want others to come in".

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh made the remarks while hearing a plea opposing the other backward class (OBC) reservation in Maharashtra local body elections.

Petitioner Mangesh Shankar Sasane's counsel Gopal Sankaranarayanan submitted that Maharashtra government's Banthia Commission gave 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in the local body elections without ascertaining if they were politically backward.

PHOTO: PTI

Sankaranarayanan submitted that d the OBCs couldn't be presumed to be politically backward.

Justice Kant said when one follows the principle of inclusivity, states were bound to identify more classes.

The top court issued notice on the plea and sought the state government's response while tagging the matter with the pending ones.

The bench ordered the state election commission to notify the Maharashtra local bodies' polls in four weeks which are to be held in line with the period before the 2022 Banthia Commission report.

The elections should be concluded in four months, though liberty can be granted to seek more time in appropriate cases.

The outcome of the elections would be subject to decisions in pending petitions before apex court.

In 2022, the top court directed the SEC and the Maharashtra government to maintain the status quo with regard to the poll process to the local bodies in the state. *—PTI*

Prison warder suspended over video against CM

MYSURU, 6 MAY

A warder at Mysuru Central Prison was suspended after he allegedly circulated a video humiliating Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on social media, jail officials said on Tuesday. HN Madhu Kumar, 45, an ex-Army man, has been serving the prison department for the past four years, they said. According to officials, in a video recorded at his residence, which has now gone viral on social media, Kumar condemned the CM's angry gesture towards a police officer on stage during a programme in Belagavi on 28 April. Mysuru Central Prison Superintendent BS Ramesh said the warder was suspended from duty on Monday evening for misconduct as soon as the matter came to light. In the video, Kumar also criticised Siddaramaiah on several issues. —*PTI*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

4 held in drug bust in City, ganja worth ₹90L seized

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

City police have arrested four individuals, including a known rowdy, and seized ganja worth over Rs 90 lakh in separate anti-drug operations. HSR Layout Police made the largest haul, arresting a man near a private school in Sector 4. Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted an Eicher goods vehicle carrying 62 kg of ganja worth Rs 60 lakh. The accused sourced the drugs from Odisha to distribute among students and software professionals. The vehicle and a mobile phone were seized. In a separate operation, Govindarajanagar Police arrested a notorious rowdy in Pattegarpalya, recovering 43.8 kg of ganja valued at Rs 25 lakh. He is listed as a habitual offender by Banashankari Police. Additionally, GM Palya Police apprehended two men near Veeranjaneya Swamy Temple while attempting to sell 4.185 kg of ganja. They also seized a motorcycle and two mobile phones, with the total value pegged at Rs 4.2 lakh. Both suspects have prior NDPS Act cases. —*Salar News*

City cops caught taking ₹1 lakh bribe

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

In yet another embarrassing blot on the city police force, the Police Inspector and Sub-Inspector (PSI) of Kempegowda Nagar police station were caught red-handed by the Lokayukta while accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh in connection with a case under investigation. As per a complaint filed with the Lokayukta, Inspector Shivaji Rao and PSI Shivananda had allegedly demanded a total bribe of Rs 6 lakh from an accused in a case registered at their station, promising favourable action. Acting on the complaint, the Lokayukta Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Girish and his team laid a trap and caught the officers while accepting part of the bribe on Monday. A case has now been registered against both officers, and investigations are underway.—*Salar News*

Sirens, evacuations as City to practice mock drills

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

A major nationwide civil defence drill will take place across 32 locations in City on Wednesday, 7 May, as part of a preparedness initiative led by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Triggered by recent Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, the exercise aims to assess and enhance emergency readiness.

Sirens will sound at key zones including the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), National Aerospace Laboratories, ITPL, ESIC Hospital, VV Tower, Canara Bank, and various fire and police stations across Yeshwanthpur,Banashankari, Rajajinagar, Chamarajpet, and Electronics City. City has 35 siren units, 32 of which are operational, each covering a 3km radius with three distinct alarm tones.

The drills will simulate air-raid warnings, blackouts, evacuation rehearsals, bunker inspections, and emergency communication with Indian Air Force. Civilian training in first aid, firefighting, and shelter protocols is included.

Similar drills will be held in Karwar—home to INS Kadamba and Kaiga nuclear plant—and Raichur, selected for its thermal power station. All are classified under Category B, with scaled-down protocols compared to border regions.

Director General of Police Prashant Kumar Thakur stated the exercise will begin at 4 pm, covering both day and night preparedness. Around 5,000 civil defence personnel in City will be deployed. A final plan was set via video conference with Ministry.

Citizens are urged not to panic and to follow guidance. Officials emphasise this is not symbolic but a "rehearsal for reality". —*Salar News*

Book debunks 'Muslims will outnumber Hindus' myth

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

A fair look at Islamophobia in India shows that it wasn't Islam that caused it, but a sense of political insecurity fuelled by exaggerated fears about the increase in Muslim population.

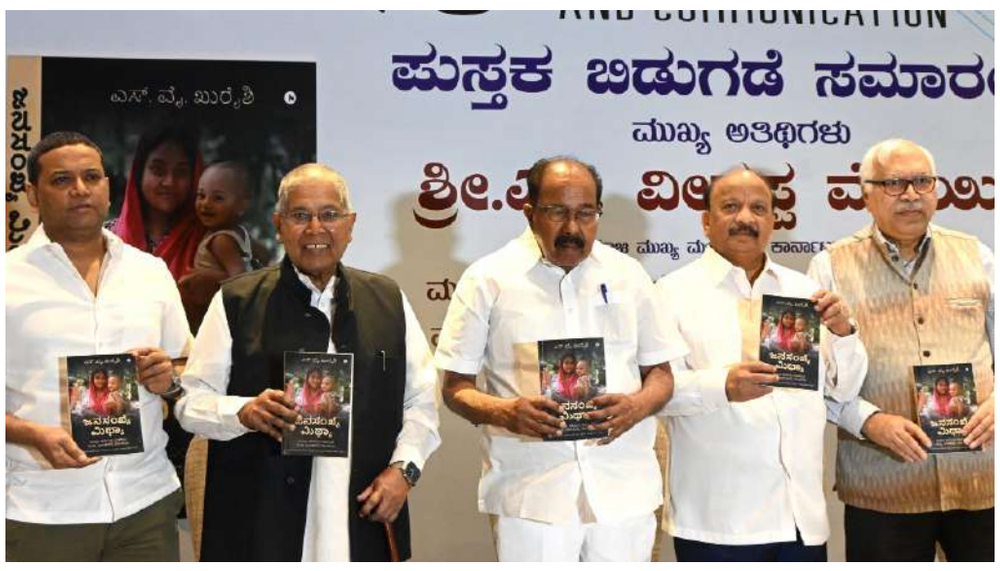
That firm assertion by former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi set the tone of the programme during the launch of the Kannada translation of his acclaimed book, "The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India" in the City on Tuesday. The translation is titled, "Janasankhye Mithya".

Organised by the Centre for Research and Communication, the event drew political veterans, scholars, and civil society voices seeking data-driven clarity amid rising misinformation.

Originally published in 2021, the book addresses the widespread belief that Muslims are driving India's population growth.

"The claim that Muslims will outnumber Hindus or that a Muslim Prime Minister is imminent is not only false, but also dangerous," Quraishi said, pointing to government data. "Between 1951 and 2011, Hindu population rose by 67.6 crore, Muslims by 13.6 crore. Yet Muslims are adopting family planning methods faster today."

The 77-year-old retired IAS officer dismantled myths around polygamy as well, citing the landmark 1975 government report on the status of women which shows polygamy has existed in all communities. Interestingly, Muslims had the lowest rates, as far as polygamy was concerned.



AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan, along with former Rajya Sabha deputy chairman K Rahman Khan, former chief minister M Veerappa Moily, and former minister R Roshan Baig, at the launch of the Kannada translation of the book 'Population Myth' by former chief election commissioner of India SY Quraishi, in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

> **The claim that Muslims will outnumber Hindus or that a Muslim Prime Minister is imminent is not only false, but also dangerous Between 1951 and 2011, Hindu population rose by 67.6 crore, Muslims by 13.6 crore.**

Recalling a meeting with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, Quraishi said he shared the government's 1975 report, which revealed that Muslims were the least polygamous among all communities, and pointed to the sex ratio of 943 women per 1,000 men to counter the myth of widespread Muslim polygamy. Bhagwat, he recalled, laughed at the data but took it seriously — and never spoke about Muslim polygamy again. "I respect him for that," Quraishi added.

Adding weight to his analysis was veteran Congress leader and former Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha K Rahman Khan, who recalled his time leading the Karnataka State Minorities Commission, said, "In our 1992–93 survey, we found Muslim family sizes matched those of Christians and Hindus. But facts often lose out to propaganda," he lamented. "Sadly, the politics of fear finds more takers than truth."

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Veerappa Moily, chief guest at the event, described the book as "essential reading in today's climate of communal distortion." He added, "The Muslims who stayed back after Partition are nationalists. They should never be treated as second-class citizens. Those dividing the country on religious lines are chipping away at the roots of our democracy."

Moily ended on a contemplative note, quoting American theologist Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. —*Salar News*

Court bins graft plaint against CM, KJ George

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Special Court in City has dismissed a complaint alleging a conspiracy involving State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Minister KJ George and three senior officials that they caused significant advertisement revenue losses to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) between 2015 and 2017.

The court ruled that the accusations lacked substance and were based on conjecture rather than concrete evidence.

The complaint, filed by a former corporator and BJP leader NR Ramesh, claimed that the BBMP suffered losses of Rs 68.14 crore during Siddaramaiah's earlier tenure as Chief Minister (2013–2018).

Ramesh alleged that the state government used BBMP-owned bus shelters to advertise its achievements without paying the mandatory advertisement fee.

He further claimed that Congress leaders may have bribed BBMP and Information Department officials to avoid raising dues.

However, in its April 28 order, the Special Court, presided over by Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, found the allegations insufficient to warrant even a preliminary inquiry.

The judge remarked that the complaint was rooted in "assumptions and presumptions" rather than material evidence, and emphasised that criminal proceedings cannot be initiated based on speculative claims.

The court acknowledged that while the use of bus shelters for government publicity without formal payments may indicate procedural lapses, such irregularities do not necessarily constitute corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

State Lokayukta had earlier closed the complaint, stating that the BBMP, being the potentially aggrieved party, had not filed any grievance against the State government. —*PTI*

- The judge remarked that the complaint was rooted in "assumptions and presumptions" rather than material evidence, and emphasised that criminal proceedings cannot be initiated based on speculative claims.

BBMP cracks down on illegally operating PGs

BENGALURU 6 MAY

Following a spate of complaints and viral videos depicting inappropriate behaviour by residents in paying guest (PG) accommodations, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has launched a city-wide crackdown on unauthorised PG facilities. The move comes after a particularly disturbing incident in HSR Layout, where locals expressed outrage over a video of a young woman running nude in a residential area, reportedly from a PG home.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, BBMP Special Commissioner Vikas Kishore Suralkar said the civic body has taken the issue seriously, especially considering the embarrassment caused to surrounding residents by the conduct in and around such accomodations. "These unauthorised PGs are mushrooming unchecked and creating severe public nuisance. We have received numerous complaints, and action is now being taken," he said.

Suralkar revealed that the BBMP has so far identified over 1,200 illegal PG accommodations operating without proper clearances across Bengaluru.

Of these, 200 PGs have already been shut down by the health department officials of the civic body. A revised set of guidelines for PG operations has been framed, focusing on ensuring better oversight and accountability of operators. —*Salar News*

Imam condemns janivara removal at NEET centres

PHOTO: SALAR

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

City Jamia Masjid Chief Imam and Khateeb Maulana Maqsood Imran Rashadi condemned the incident in Kalaburagi wherein a Brahmin student was allegedly asked to remove his sacred thread (janivara) before being allowed to appear for the NEET competitive examination.

Calling the act "immoral and unconstitutional", Maulana Rashadi said the action violated the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, which assures all citizens the freedom to profess and practise their religion.

"The janivara is not just a symbol – it is a sacred part of a Brahmin's faith. Forcing a person to remove it is an affront to our democratic ethos," he said.

Rashadi mentioned earlier incidents where Muslim girls were denied entry into exam halls wearing hijabs on the grounds that it represents a disturbing pattern of religious discrimination.

"Today it is a Brahmin student, yesterday it was a Muslim girl. If we do not stand united, the rights of all will be at risk," he warned.

Appealing for immediate corrective action, he urged examination authorities to ensure that students of all communities are treated with dignity. —*Salar News*

'SOUTH B'LURU'S WATER PROBLEM TO END BY DEC'

MANDYA, 6 MAY

State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced that the permanent drinking water supply project to taluks in City's South district would be completed by December this year.

"The drinking water project has been taken up at the cost of Rs 540 crores. We had promised to supply drinking water to all taluks in City's South district during the Chennapatna by-polls, and we are committed to honour the promise," Shivakumar said at Belakawadi in Malavalli taluk.

Shivakumar performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the project near Sattegala reservoir on Monday morning. The project envisages the supply of drinking water to Ramanagar, Kanakapura, Chennapatna and Magadi taluks in Bengaluru South district. —*ANI*

Sorry Karnataka, says Sonu Nigam

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Singer **Sonu Nigam** has issued an apology following his Bengaluru concert row. He shared a post on his Instagram handle, saying his love for State is bigger than his ego.

"Sorry, Karnataka. My Love for you, is bigger than my Ego. Love you always," Nigam posted on Monday evening.

The incident took place on 25 April when Nigam was performing at a college in City. As explained by the singer in his previous video post, he was pressured by a group of boys to sing in Kannada language.

He responded by saying, "Kannada. Kannada. This is the reason behind the incident in Pahalgam." Many found these comments made by Nigam hurtful.

An FIR was also registered at the Avalahalli Police Station in Bengaluru on 3 May against the singer.

On Monday, the State Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) announced a 'non-cooperation' campaign against him for his allegedly controversial remark —*PTI*

A group of top gold medalists with their medals during the 27th Convocation of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health and Science, at NIMHANS Convention Center in Bengaluru, on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

'City medical graduates must prioritise compassion'

BENGALURU 6 MAY

Medical graduates must place service, empathy, and equitable healthcare at the heart of their practice, said State Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil at the 27th convocation of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences on Tuesday.

Addressing the graduating students, Patil called them "guardians of public health" and urged them to treat all patients with dignity and understanding, regardless of background or location.

He stressed the importance of ethics and cultural sensitivity, in an era where technology is rapidly transforming the medical field. Minister encouraged the graduates to act as "health messengers".

The convocation was attended by Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, Azim Premji, Chairman of the Azim Premji Foundation, and RGUHS Vice-Chancellor Bhagavan. The university honoured outstanding contributions by Professor Hombe Gowda Sharath Chandra, Girish Rao, and GT Subhash. —*Salar News*

2 BOOKED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE AT IPL VENUE

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

A case of sexual harassment and criminal intimidation was registered against two unknown people after wife of an IPS officer lodged a complaint alleging that her children were harassed during a recent IPL match between RCB and CSK at M Chinnaswamy stadium here, police said. The incident occurred in Diamond Box, a premium seating enclosure, around 9.40pm on 3 May, they said. The complainant said, two people abused her son, 22, and inappropriately touched her daughter, 26. The woman alleged that the duo shouted at, threatened and disturbed her children. They also abused her daughter and behaved "indecently" with her. She said entire incident was recorded by her son on his mobile phone. Police said one of the suspects involved in the incident was a senior IT official. —*PTI*

ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

City cops geo-tag 5.35L CCTV cameras

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

To enhance public safety and crime prevention, City Police have geo-tagged over 5,35,815 CCTV cameras across the city under the MCCTNS (Mobile Companion for Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems) initiative, Commissioner B Dayananda announced on Tuesday.

This marks a massive addition of 3,03,104 cameras since January 1, 2024, when the City had just 2.32 lakh surveillance

units. The initial target of reaching 5 lakh cameras by mid-2025 has been exceeded well ahead of schedule, with the milestone crossed by 30 April 2025.

"All cameras are now geo-tagged, enabling police to quickly locate surveillance footage and boost efficiency in crime detection," Dayananda said. The cameras have been strategically installed across residential areas, commercial zones, traffic junctions, schools, hospitals, and banks.

Geo-tagging on the MCCTNS platform also strengthens smart patrolling, real-time crime analysis, and lays the groundwork for future digital policing. The Commissioner highlighted the importance of such systems as City continues to expand and hosts frequent high-profile events.

"This is a record achievement in surveillance expansion within a single year," he noted, adding that precise location data improves police response times and arrest success rates.

The City police reaffirmed their commitment to leveraging technology for a safer, smarter City. —*Salar News*

J&K's Doda bans VPN use for two months

JAMMU, 6 MAY

Authorities in Doda here have prohibited the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPN), citing public safety, cybersecurity, and integrity of digital governance in the district, an official spokesperson said on Tuesday. Doda administration also issued strict prohibitory orders against hate speech, provocative statements and acts that incite violence, he said. Spokesperson said the authorities have found that certain individuals and groups were misusing the VPNs to circumvent cyber restrictions and access prohibited applications, websites and digital content, jeopardising national security. In another order issued by District Magistrate Anil Kumar Thakur, strict prohibitory orders were issued against hate speech, and acts that incite violence. The orders will stay in force for two months, unless withdrawn earlier. *—PTI*

Pak troops target posts along LoC in J&K

Ajit Doval meets PM for 2nd time in 24 hours as Pak violates ceasefire for 12th straight night

JAMMU & KASHMIR, 6 MAY

Pakistani troops have continued to violate the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, prompting a retaliatory response from the Indian Army. This marks the 12th consecutive night of unprovoked firing.

A Defence spokesperson confirmed that Pakistan initiated small-arms fire across multiple sectors, including Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, and Akhnoor. Hostilities, which began in Kupwara and Baramulla, have since spread southwards into Rajouri, Poonch, and the Pargwal sector of Jammu.

The ongoing exchange of fire has impacted five of Jammu and Kashmir's seven border districts.

India and Pakistan share a 3,323 km-long border, divided into the 2,400 km International Border (IB), the 740 km Line of Control (LoC), and the 110 km Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) along the Siachen Glacier.

> **Appeal to all citizens, BJP Karyakartas and leaders, students to come forward and volunteer... Your participation will make all the difference**
>
> -BJP

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday for the second time in 24 hours, as India intensifies its security posture following the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. .

The 40-minute meeting, held at the Prime Minister's residence, comes ahead of nationwide mock security drills planned by state governments, the first such exercise since the 1971 war, to bolster civil defence preparedness in the event of a hostile attack.

The Resistance Front, a proxy of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam strike. India maintains it has credible evidence of involvement by Pakistan's "deep state", reigniting long-standing accusations of cross-border terrorism support.

A 26-year-old Pakistani intruder was arrested along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch on Tuesday, officials said. Waqas, a resident of Tarkhal village in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was taken into custody by army from a forward village in the Chakan-Da-Bagh area shortly after he crossed the LoC and entered Indian territory, the officials said. *—PTI*

What to expect from mock drills, first since 1971

What is a mock drill?
A mock drill is a simulated emergency exercise that helps individuals and organisations practise responses to crises such as hostile attacks, fires or earthquakes. It trains participants to act swiftly, tests emergency plans, and improves coordination in a safe, controlled setting.

Who will be involved?
Civil defence personnel, citizens and emergency services

Amid heightened tensions with Pak, India is set to conduct nationwide civil defence mock drills on 7 May to assess the country's readiness for any hostile attacks. The last such drill was conducted in 1971, the year in which both countries went to war.

Where will it be conducted?
In 244 districts of Andaman and Nicobar, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Ladakh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE MOCK DRILL?

According to the notification by the Union Home Ministry

- The drill will assess how effective air raid sirens are in alerting people about aerial threats.
- Trains civilians to respond quickly and safely during an air strike.
- Hotline and radio links between civil authorities and the Air Force will be activated and tested.
- Will check how well control rooms and their backups perform during emergencies.
- People, including students, will be trained to protect themselves.
- The drill will include blackout exercises, where residents will be asked to switch off lights to simulate conditions during an air raid.
- Authorities will practice camouflaging airfields, refineries and rail yards from aerial detection or attack.
- The preparedness of rescue teams and firefighters will be tested. Evacuation plans will also be rehearsed to move people from danger zones to safer areas.
- Civilians will receive hands-on training in providing basic first aid, handling firefighting equipment, and taking shelter during emergencies.

PHOTO: PTI

Stalin declares 5 May as official Traders' Day in TN

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin revealed that 5 May celebrated annually by the members of the Tamil Nadu Traders' Associations, will soon be officially recognised as Traders' Day in the state. Speaking at the 42nd annual meeting of the Traders' Association in Maduranthakam, Stalin unveiled several welfare measures for traders, including an increase in assistance for those registered with the Traders' Welfare Board from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. Additionally, the free membership period will be extended by six months. Stalin encouraged traders to name their shops in Tamil, and announced that businesses under 500 sq ft, would receive self-certification licenses. He announced creation of a new website for traders *—PTI*

Four killed, 44 injured as bus falls into gorge in J&K

MENDHAR, 6 MAY

A devastating bus accident in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday resulted in the deaths of four passengers, including a soldier, and left 44 others injured. The private bus, en route from Ghani village to Mendhar, skidded off the road and plunged into a gorge around 9:20 am, officials reported.

Local residents quickly launched a rescue operation, supported by police, Army, and CRPF personnel. The critical condition of several injured prompted medical transfers to Jammu Government Medical College.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed their condolences, with Abdullah dispatching his cabinet colleague, Javed Ahmad Rana, to oversee relief efforts and medical support. *—PTI*

Protesters in Bihar lathicharged near CM's residence

PATNA, 6 MAY

Chaos unfolded near Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's official residence as police clashed with aspirants demanding the release of supplementary results for the Teacher Recruitment Exam (TRE-3). Protesters gathered outside the high-security area of 1 Anne Marg, leading to a police baton-charge when they refused to disperse. Aspirants displayed placards and shouted slogans against the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) and the state government. One protester, Kriti Dutta, stated that they had been demonstrating for four months, seeking action from ministers and officials. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav condemned the police response. *—PTI*

INDIA TO GET BRAHMOS-ARMED STEALTH FRIGATE FROM RUSSIA

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

In a boost to India's maritime power amid heightened tensions with Pakistan, the Navy is set to receive Tamal, one of the world's most advanced stealth warships. Built at Russia's Yantar Shipyard, Tamal is the second of four Talwar-class frigates under a 2016 Indo-Russian agreement and will be handed over on 28 May and officially commissioned by June 2025. Tamal, can

speed up to 30 knots features BrahMos missile capability, advanced anti-submarine weapons, radar-evading stealth design. It is also equipped with sonar systems for underwater threat neutralisation. *—Agencies*

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee during her visit to Murshidabad district on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Outsiders sowed violence: Mamata

SUTI, 6 MAY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met with Murshidabad victims on Tuesday.

Banerjee visited the riot-hit areas of Murshidabad for the first time since the incident took place on April. Banerjee is currently in Murshidabad on a two-day visit to the riot-hit areas in the district, and meet the victims and their families.

On her second day, she visited Samserganj to hold a discussion with the families affected by the clash. She alleged that rioters are being brought to the State from outside to orchestrate violence, and urged people not to create division among themselves by paying heed to the "BJP or religious fundamentalists".

Banerjee, while speaking at a government programme in Murshidabad, reiterated that the Waqf (Amendment) Act would not be implemented in Bengal.

"Rioters are being brought to Bengal from outside, do not get provoked by them... Do not create division among yourselves listening to the BJP or any religious fundamentalists," she said.

The Chief Minister also urged people not to indulge in violence over protests against the Waqf Amendment Act.

Violence erupted in Murshidabad's Dhuliyan, Samserganj and some other places of the district during the anti-Waqf (Amendment) Act protests in the second week of April, claiming the lives of three persons. *—PTI*

Local body elections in Maharashtra to happen in 4 weeks PHOTO: PTI

SC paves way for long stalled M'rashtra local polls

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared the way for holding Maharashtra's local body elections, which have been stalled for over five years due to the OBC reservation dispute.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh directed the Maharashtra State Election Commission (SEC) to notify the polls within four weeks and complete the process within four months. The polls will be conducted based on the OBC reservation framework that existed before the 2022 Banthia Commission report, which recommended a 27% quota for OBCs.

The court noted that grassroots democracy must be upheld and expressed concern over bureaucrats occupying elected posts and making major policy decisions. It criticised the prolonged delay in elections due to ongoing litigation and emphasised that "no irreversible loss would be caused" by proceeding with polls. The court reaffirmed that elections to 367 local bodies, where the process had already started before the 2022 status quo order, cannot have OBC reservation unless the triple test—mandated in a 2010 ruling—is satisfied. These include 92 municipal councils and four nagar panchayats.

Pending legal challenges on OBC quotas will not affect the conduct of elections but may influence final outcomes. The SEC can seek more time if needed. *— PTI*

Discuss caste census, Kharge in letter to Modi

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the government's caste census decision, urging him to draw upon the Telangana model as well as have a dialogue with all political parties soon on this issue.

In his letter to Modi, Kharge has also urged the prime minister to remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation by a constitutional amendment and immediately implement Article 15(5) providing for reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs in private educational institutions.

The Congress President recalled that had also written to the prime minister on 16 April, 2023 putting forward the Congress' demand for an up-to-date caste census.

Caste information has to be collected not for counting purposes but for achieving larger socio-economic objectives, Kharge pointed out calling for immediate implementation of Article 15(5). *—PTI*

Centre opposes Kerala vs Guv plea retraction

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Centre has opposed the Kerala government's attempt to withdraw its petition against the state Governor concerning delays in approving bills passed by the state assembly. Senior advocate K K Venugopal, representing Kerala, stated that recent developments had rendered the original petition unnecessary, as the bills were subsequently forwarded to the President.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta contested this position, emphasising that constitutional matters should not be withdrawn lightly. "When a person of your stature withdraws, it must be taken seriously," Mehta remarked.

The Supreme Court had earlier agreed to examine whether a recent ruling regarding Tamil Nadu's bills—which established a time limit for presidential assent—was applicable to Kerala's situation. This decision arose after the Tamil Nadu government successfully challenged the President's reservation of ten bills, deemed "illegal" by the court.

Venugopal contended that the issues surrounding Kerala's bills aligned with the

PHOTO: PTI

Tamil Nadu verdict, urging the court to permit similar directions for Kerala. However, Mehta insisted that Kerala's case was distinct and required further submissions.

The bench has scheduled the matter for 13 May, recognising the state's right to withdraw its plea while encouraging Venugopal to present a subsequent petition regarding presidential assent withholding before the Chief Justice.

The Supreme Court previously expressed discontent over the actions of former Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who had delayed assent on various bills for up to two years. *—PTI*

SC RESTORES CPI(M) A RAJA'S POLL VICTORY

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court has overturned a ruling by the Kerala High Court that annulled the election of CPI(M) leader A Raja from the Devikulam Assembly constituency in Idukki district. A bench comprising Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Prashant Kumar Mishra allowed Raja's appeal against the 23 March, 2023, decision of the High Court.

The bench set aside High Court judgement affirming Raja's entitlement to all benefits as a member of the legislative assembly for the entire duration.

The legal battle stemmed from allegations by Congress leader D Kumar, who claimed Raja was ineligible to contest the reserved SC seat, arguing he had converted to Christianity and submitted a fraudulent caste certificate. Raja countered that he belongs to the Hindu Parayan community, producing a caste certificate from the local Tahsildar. He maintained that both he and his family had not converted to Christianity. With the Supreme Court's ruling, Raja's election victory from the 2021 polls now stands,, SC said *—PTI*

PROTECT SOVEREIGNTY

Maldives amends defence pacts with Delhi, Indian soldiers repatriated

MALE, 6 MAY

The Maldives has announced amendments to its existing defence agreements with India to ensure the protection of its sovereignty and independence. Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon made this statement during a parliamentary session, following concerns raised by opposition figures about the legitimacy of agreements signed under the previous government.

Maumoon clarified that 74 Indian personnel who were stationed in the Maldives had been repatriated and had remained unarmed during their deployment. His remarks follow Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's lengthy press conference in which he downplayed worries over military agreements, claiming there was no cause for concern.

The Defence Minister highlighted that the Maldives has signed over 100 agreements with India since gaining independence in 1965, with four specifically overseen by the defence ministry.

He confirmed that one key

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's held a lengthy press conference in which he downplayed worries over military agreements PHOTO: PTI

agreement concerning the development of a naval dockyard at Uthuru Thilafalhu is under review due to complicating clauses previously identified by Muizzu's People's National Congress party.

Addressing claims regarding the Indian military presence, Maumoon confirmed that no Indian forces are currently in the Maldives, and the personnel had been involved only in operational support for aircraft under India's assistance programme.

Following tensions since Muizzu assumed office in November 2023, both nations are attempting to rebuild diplomatic ties. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

T'gana transport workers to go on strike from 7 May

HYDERABAD, 6 MAY

Telangana transport workers, who will go on an indefinite strike from 7 May, have said they were not contacted by the state government or the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC). Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy recently appealed to the transport employees to call off the strike, saying that it would derail TGSRTC's improving financial situation and that the government would clear the previous government's dues. Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar also urged the employees to reconsider the strike. *—Salar news*

Woman Naxalite killed in Bijapur encounter

RAIPUR, 6 MAY

A woman Naxalite was shot dead in an encounter with security forces in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh, according to a senior police official. The clash occurred on Monday in the dense forests of Karregutta Hills, which lie along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border. A joint team of security personnel has been engaged in a significant anti-Naxal operation in the region for over two weeks, stated Inspector General of Police for Bastar Range, Sundarraj P. Following the gunfire, the body of the female Naxalite and a .303 rifle were recovered from the scene. This marks the fourth female Maoist casualty in the ongoing operation that commenced on 21 April, the official confirmed. *—PTI*

CUET-UG exam may be postponed amidst concerns

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG, initially set to commence on May 8, is expected to be postponed, according to sources. An official announcement regarding the revised schedule is anticipated shortly. The National Testing Agency (NTA) has yet to release a subject-wise timetable, raising concerns among the 13.5 lakh applicants this year. Sources indicate that the decision follows the recent conclusion of the medical entrance exam NEET-UG, which faced scrutiny over its integrity last year. This year's CUET-UG will feature a shift to a Computer-Based Test (CBT) format, abandoning the hybrid model used previously. The inaugural exam in 2022 was marred by technical issues, requiring score normalisation for results. Last year, the exam was cancelled across Delhi the night before its scheduled date due to logistical problems, prompting further scrutiny over management processes. *—PTI*

Murder accused's house razed in Uttarakhand

RUDRAPUR, 6 MAY

Uttarakhand, authorities have demolished the house of Mushtaq, a suspect accused of beheading his live-in partner Pooja Mandal In Sitarganj. The property, situated on a plot owned by Mathura Prasad, a member of the Scheduled Caste community, was deemed to have been illegally constructed. District Magistrate Nitin Bhadauria confirmed the demolition as executed in conjunction with the district administration and heavily supported by police presence. Mushtaq's father, Ali Ahmed, reportedly occupied the land unlawfully. The investigation into Pooja's murder, with her dismembered body discovered in the Nadanna canal after she went missing for five months, was initiated following a complaint from her sister. Mushtaq, a taxi driver, is alleged to have committed the crime on 16 November last year. *—PTI*

SC junks plea against bench hearing Godhra riot appeals

Calls for 3-judge bench as matter pertains to death penalty

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected the vehement submissions of a few convicts that a two-judge bench cannot hear their appeals against conviction as the matter pertained to the award of death penalty to 11 accused in the 2002 Godhra train burning case.

Advocate Sanjay Hegde told the bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Aravind Kumar that it has been held in the Red Fort terror attack case, in which Mohammad Arif alias Ashfaq was handed down the death penalty, that a three-judge bench has to hear cases pertaining to the award of capital punishment.

"Suppose, this bench of two judges decides to award death penalty, then it has to be re-argued before another bench of three judges," Hegde said.

A Constitution bench of the apex court had in its September 2014 judgment concluded that in all cases in which death sentence was awarded by the high court, such matters be listed before a bench of three judges.

Dismissing the submissions, the bench referred to relevant Supreme Court rules and the judgement and said that a three-judge bench has to hear appeals in cases where the high courts have either confirmed death penalty or awarded it after hearing the appeals of parties. *—PTI*

A Constitution bench of the SC had in its September 2014 judgment concluded that in all cases in which death sentence was awarded by the high court, such matters be listed before a bench of three judges **PHOTO: PTI**

SC SEEKS UPDATES ON STUDENTS' SUICIDES

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought to know if FIRs were registered after suicides of a IIT Kharagpur student and a NEET aspirant in Kota, Rajasthan, came to light. A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan directed its registry to call for a report from both places at the earliest.

The top court noted that a 22-year-old student of IIT–Kharagpur was found hanging in his hostel room on 4 May, 2025, and a NEET aspirant hanged herself at her room in Parshavanath area in Kota ahead of the National Medical Entrants Examination scheduled on 11 May. *—PTI*

PMLA PROBE

ED probes Gujarat Waqf 'fraud' case

AHMEDABAD, 6 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday conducted multiple searches in Gujarat as part of a money laundering investigation linked to alleged financial irregularities in some Waqf properties in the state, official sources said.

A case has been filed by the agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of an FIR field by Ahmedabad Police against one Salim Khan Jumma Khan Pathan, Mohammad Yasar Abdulhamiya Sheikh, Mehmud Khan Jumma Khan Pathan, Fezmohamad Pir Mohammad Chobdar and Saheed Ahmad Yakubhai Sheikh.

The accused had "illegally" claimed to be trustees of the Kanch Ki Masjid Trust and Shah Bada Kasam Trust, the agency said.

About nine premises of the accused and their associates are being raided across Gujarat by the Ahmedabad zonal office of the federal probe agency, the sources said.

The accused entered into "fraud" lease agreements, extorted rents from tenants, and submitted "false" affidavits to the Waqf Board, according to agency sources.

The ED suspects that the accused built shops on Trust's land and collected rent and committed "fraud and conspiracy" against the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Waqf Board for "personal" gains.

Sources said a plot of land located adjacent to the 'Kanch Ki Masjid' was originally owned by the Kanch Ki Masjid Trust. This land, according to sources, was given to the AMC years ago with an agreement that it would be used for the construction of two Urdu schools. The "intent" was to educate local children of classes 1 to 7. *—PTI*

SIT to probe 'love trap' cases in MP

BHOPAL, 6 MAY

In light of the alleged rape of college girls in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh Director General of Police has constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to probe cases related to "targeted love trap" and "coerced religious conversions" across the state, said Additional Director General (Crime Against Women) Pragya Richa Srivastava on Tuesday.

The SIT has been constituted to investigate incidents of vulnerable girls and women getting targeted, exploited and forced to convert under fear and pressure in some districts of Madhya Pradesh, said the order issued by the police headquarters.

It stated that the police had received information that in some districts, girls and women from socially insecure and weaker sections have been targeted through "love trap, deception, threat or other temptations and have been exploited mentally, physically and socially".

In these incidents, the victims have been allegedly converted on the basis of fear, pressure or deception, it said.

The order said the SIT would investigate in detail such incidents and identify persons, organisations or gangs involved in the acts and ensure strict legal action against them.

The team will also probe the involvement of any interstate or foreign network and collect evidence by analysing cyber and digital means. The SIT, headed by the Inspector General of Police, Bhopal (Rural) Zone, is also told to present the necessary measures and recommendations to prevent such incidents in future, the order stated.

The Bhopal police have arrested five accused, including the main accused, Farhan Ali, for allegedly raping the students. *—PTI*

PRINCIPAL AND LIBRARIAN SUSPENDED IN MP

KHARGONE, 6 MAY

A corridor at Eklavya Adarsh Awasiya Vidyalaya in MP's Khargone district erupted into chaos when the principal and librarian, both women, engaged in a physical altercation following a heated argument. A video of the incident circulated widely on social media, prompting immediate action from local authorities.

The footage, lasting 90 seconds, captures the two women arguing, with one attempting to record the dispute on her mobile phone. Tensions escalated as the principal slapped her rival and snatched the phone, leading to a hair-pulling struggle until another staff member intervened. The conflict reportedly stemmed from disagreements over their respective duties.

In response to the viral video, both women were suspended and reassigned to the office of the Assistant Commissioner for Tribal Development in Khargone. District Collector Bhavya Mittal labelled the incident as "unfortunate". *—PTI*

Union Carbide waste disposal begins

BHOPAL, 6 MAY

The incineration of 307 tonnes of waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal has begun in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district and is expected to be completed in 55 days, an official said on Tuesday.

The process began around 7.45 pm on Monday at a disposal plant run by a private company in Pithampur, about 250km from Bhopal, said state Pollution Control Board's regional officer Srinivas Dwivedi.

The officer said that as per the MP High Court's directive on 27 March, the waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory is being burnt at the maximum rate of 270kg per hour under the supervision of technical experts of the central and the state pollution control boards.

"We estimate that the entire waste of Union Carbide will be burnt to ashes in the next 50 to 55 days," Dwivedi said.

He said the emission of different gases and particles from the plant was being monitored through an online system.

The emission of particulate matter, hydrogen chloride, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, total organic carbon, hydrogen fluoride and nitrogen oxide is being monitored through this system, he said.

He added that the ambient air quality in the surrounding areas is also being checked. *—PTI*

The waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory is being burnt at the maximum rate of 270kg per hour **PHOTO: PTI**

Cooperate on Sutlej-Yamuna Link, SC tells Punjab, Haryana

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the governments of Punjab and Haryana to cooperate with the Centre to resolve the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal row.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih was informed by the Centre that it has already taken effective steps to resolve the issue amicably.

"We direct both the states to cooperate with the Union of India in arriving at an amicable solution," the bench said.

The bench said it would hear the matter on August 13 if it is not resolved by then.

"We have made efforts for mediation, but the states have to walk the talk," Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, told the bench.

The SYL canal was conceptualised for the effective allocation of water from the Ravi and Beas rivers. The project envisaged a 214-km canal, of which 122 km was to be constructed in Punjab and 92 km in Haryana.

Haryana has completed the project in its territory, but Punjab, which launched the construction work in 1982, later shelved it.

The top court had on 15 January, 2002, ruled in favour of Haryana and directed Punjab to construct its portion of the SYL canal. *—PTI*

For effective allocation of water, the SYL canal link was conceptualised and both the states were required to construct their portions **PHOTO: PTI**

Flight AI188, operated with a Boeing 777-300ER, had been airborne for some time before being rerouted **PHOTO: PTI**

AI flight diverted again due to clogged toilets

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 6 MAY

An Air India flight from Toronto to Delhi was diverted to Frankfurt on 2 May, owing to clogged lavatories, according to sources. While an Air India spokesperson cited a "technical issue" as the reason for the diversion, internal sources confirmed that malfunctioning lavatories compelled the aircraft to change course.

Flight AI188, operated with a Boeing 777-300ER, had been airborne for some time before being rerouted. Notably, this incident marks the second occurrence in less than two months where an Air India wide-body aircraft faced a similar issue. On 6 March, flight AI126 from Chicago to Delhi returned to the US after more than 10 hours in the air, also due to lavatory problems.

According to sources, many of Air India's aircraft on ultra-long-haul routes are aging, leading to frequent plumbing issues.

The interconnected waste tanks of the older fleet can become easily blocked, rendering multiple lavatories unusable. It was also suggested that the actions of some passengers—who reportedly dispose of inappropriate items in the toilets – exacer bate these plumbing challenges. *—PTI*

DELHI HC STAYS ORDER AGAINST AR RAHMAN

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Delhi High Court has granted a stay on an interim order concerning copyright infringement allegations against composer A R Rahman and the producers of "Ponniyin Selvan 2". A bench comprising Justices C Hari Shankar and Ajay Digpaul instructed Rahman and the filmmakers to deposit Rs 2 crore with the court's registry within ten days, as previously mandated by a single judge.

On 25 April, the single judge had decreed that credits for the Junior Dagar Brothers—Late Ustad N Faiyazuddin Dagar and Late Ustad Zahiruddin Dagar—should be included in the film's credits on OTT platforms, a direction that has also been stayed.

The initial ruling stated that Rahman's song "Veera Raja Veera" bore striking similarities to the "Shiva Stuti", violating the original composers' rights. Ustad Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar, who filed the suit, claimed ownership of the copyright for all works by the Junior Dagar Brothers, asserting that the new composition infringed upon their original work. *—PTI*

MIRROR OF TRANSPARENCY

CJI has ₹55.75L in banks; Gavai, ₹19L

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

In a significant move towards transparency, the Supreme Court of India has made the asset declarations of its judges public by uploading them to its website. This initiative follows a full-court decision made on 1 April, 2025, aimed at enhancing public awareness regarding the financial details of its members.

Outgoing Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who will retire on 13 May, has reported assets including Rs 55.75 lakh in fixed deposits, a three-bedroom DDA flat in South Delhi, and a four-bedroom apartment in the Commonwealth Games Village. Additionally, he holds a 56 per cent share in a four-bedroom flat in Gurugram and has substantial investments in Public Provident Fund and General Provident Fund.

Incoming Chief Justice BR Gavai, set to assume office on 14 May, declares over Rs 19.63 lakh in bank deposits, along with various properties including a house in Maharashtra and apartments in Mumbai and Delhi. His movable assets include gold jewellery worth Rs 5.25 lakh.

- Judges Surya Kant, Abhay S Oka, Vikram Nath and newly elevated Justice KV Viswanathan have also revealed extensive asset portfolios

Judges including Surya Kant, Abhay S Oka, Vikram Nath, and newly elevated Justice KV Viswanathan have also revealed extensive asset portfolios.

Justice Kant's declarations feature agricultural land, while Justice Viswanathan reports investments exceeding Rs 120 crore.

Beyond asset declarations, the Supreme Court has uploaded details regarding the appointment processes to the high courts and the Supreme Court itself, further enriching public knowledge about judicial operations. Currently, 21 out of 33 judges have made their asset details available online. *—PTI*

Sanjiv Khanna

Gaganyaan mission all set for early 2027: ISRO chief

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's first human space flight, Gaganyaan, is expected to launch in the first quarter of 2027, nearly five years behind its original schedule. The delay results from technological challenges and complications exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which disrupted astronaut training.

ISRO chief V Narayanansaid the inaugural uncrewed mission is anticipated to take place later this year, followed by two additional missions in 2026. A half-humanoid robot named Vyommitra will be sent aboard the first uncrewed mission prior to the crewed expedition to low-Earth orbit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the Gaganyaan project during his Independence Day speech in 2018, with a target of 2022 for the maiden human launch. As part of the complex mission, ISRO has developed the Environment Control and Life Support System (ECLSS) from scratch, aimed at maintaining the safety and well-being of astronauts during their journey. *—PTI*

V Narayanan

INDIA SHINES AT THE MET

Actors Shah Rukh Khan and Diljit Dosanjh turned heads at the 2025 Met Gala, an annual fundraising gala for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in Manhattan, widely regarded as the world's most prestigious fashion event. Khan made his much-anticipated debut in an all-black ensemble paired with 'K' and 'SRK' necklaces, while Dosanjh wore a culturally rich Prabal Gurung outfit celebrating his roots. This year's theme was 'Superfine: Tailoring Black Style'
PHOTO: PTI

Farmers rush to wrap up harvest near border

An alert has been issued as the tehsildar deploys 20 harvesters to accelerate the process, with 95% of the crop already harvested in the Treva region
PHOTO: PTI

Farmers living along the nearly 200-km-long International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir are racing against time to complete the harvest process amid heightened tension following the Pahalgam terror attack.

In the three districts of Jammu, Samba, and Kathua, about 1.25 lakh hectares of agricultural land falls within the shelling range of Pakistan.

Villages like Treva, Mahashe-de-Kothe, Chandu Chak, Gharana, Bulla Chak, and Korotana Kalan are witnessing a flurry of activity, with families working day and night to finish harvesting, dry the grain, and pack it for delivery to mills.

While over 90 per cent of the wheat and other crops have been harvested, the process of harvesting the rest, packaging them and sending them to mills remains.

"We are racing against time to complete harvesting," Santosh Singh, a 50-year farmer from Treva village in the Arnia sector said, adding "there is very little time left."

Treva, located just 1.5 km from the border, is directly under threat from Pakistan Rangers.

Since the 22 April Pahalgam attack that left 26 people dead, the farming community in Treva is anxious and authorities have responded with urgency.

"An alert has been sounded. The tehsildar has arranged 20 harvesters to speed up the harvesting process. Ninety-five percent of the harvesting has already been completed in these belts," another farmer from Treva, Rakesh Kumar told PTI here.

"We live in a danger zone. Every time shelling starts, we face death and destruction", he said.

Radhika Devi, who belongs to a farmers' family of village Suchetgarh, said her family had packed over 300 bags of wheat in just a few days.

"It is an emergency. Mill owners are paying well and are quickly ferrying the bags to safer areas."

Tarika Devi of Korotana Kalan echoed the urgency. "We were alerted after the Pahalgam massacre. Now that most of the harvesting is over in our belt, we are rushing to stock the produce. Shelling could resume at any time."

Amid the heightened tension, finding labour has become a challenge.

"Labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who usually help us during harvesting, have refused to work in the fields under these hostile conditions," Kuldeep Kumar, a farmer from Suchetgarh, said.

The agricultural stretch from Paharpur in Kathua district bordering Punjab to Chicken's Neck in Jammu district remains vulnerable, with thousands of families living within five km of the border constantly under threat.

Chandu Chak village farmer Sardar Teg Singh said, "The fear is constant, but we have become used to it. This time, we are better prepared. Not only can we save our lives and livestock, but we are also managing to save our crops—something we couldn't always do in the past."

According to the Basmati Rice Growers Association (BRGA) of RS Pura, nearly 1 to 1.25 lakh hectares of land, mostly known for world-class Basmati rice, is routinely impacted by cross-border shelling.

Although India and Pakistan agreed to a renewed ceasefire in February 2021, the fragile peace has come under fresh strain after the Pahalgam terror strike.

The fear gripping border residents today is reminiscent of the 2021 period, when intense shelling forced mass evacuations and destruction of property and cattle from areas along the IB.

"We feel it would be worse than the 2021 shelling and firing. It is likely to be war, which we witnessed in 1971. We are better prepared this time. We will fully support our troops bravely from our villages", 80-year-old Faqir Chand of Mahashe-de-Kothe village said.

For the farmers of Jammu's border belt, the harvest season, usually marked by celebration and relief, is now one of anxiety, urgency, and survival. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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SALAR ساہر

'China will not like to see Ind-Pak tensions escalate'

As China weighs its options watching warily the simmering India-Pakistan tensions over the Pahalgam terror attack, Chinese strategic analysts say that Beijing would not like to see the frictions go out of control and become a full-blown conflict.

"I think it has become a principle and practice for China to serve as a good office since the 1999 Kargil conflict for Indo-Pakistan tensions," a senior scholar of a prominent state-run think tank told PTI here referring to Beijing's stand that military confrontation will not resolve the crisis.

"It has always been the case since then, be it the terrorist attacks on Parliament in 2001 or 2008 Bombay terror raids," the scholar, who preferred to be anonymous, said.

"This is largely because China does not want to see Indo-Pakistan tensions go out of control that would threaten regional peace and stability," the scholar, who has worked on China, India and Pakistan relations for years, said.

"Regardless of the situation between China and India, China will maintain this position in the foreseeable future," he said.

"Since the consequence of a military war is too much for not only India and Pakistan to bear, but also too much for the region and beyond to bear, China would not allow the situation to run out of control," Hu, director of the Institute for South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said in written response to PTI here.

"China could do whatever to help in preventing or stopping any war breaking out among the neighbouring countries. In one word, China could not tolerate a big war between her neighbours," he said.

He also said that India may not prefer a major military confrontation considering that its trade negotiations with the US over President Donald Trump's tariffs are at an advanced stage.

"Modi's team aims to seize the 'strategic opportunity period' when the United States wields the 'tariff stick' against China, and attract foreign investments," Hu said.

Also "if the situation escalates, China will have to keep alert on the border regions with India in case there will some spillovers", Hu said.

He added that Beijing would also safeguard its investment with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and "do something necessary to safeguard the national interests within Pakistan".

China has called on both sides to exercise restraint but at the same time stated that as an "iron friend and all-weather strategic partner, China fully understands Pakistan's legitimate security concerns".

However, China also hopes that both sides will remain restrained and work to de-escalate the situation, he said, adding that the overall environment does not support a war between India and Pakistan.

So far, China is guarded in its reaction and response to Pahalgam attack which it strongly condemned saying it firmly opposes all forms of terrorism and expressed sincere sympathies to the bereaved families.

Beijing's first reaction to the attack came when Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar dialled China's top diplomat Wang Yi on 27 April and briefed him on the latest tensions between India and Pakistan and sought Beijing's support.

An official press release said Wang told Dar that China is closely following the post Pahalgam terror attack developments.

"Combatting terrorism is the common responsibility of all countries in the world," Wang said but at the same time expressed Beijing's backing Pakistan's counter-terrorism actions.

China supports an impartial investigation as soon as possible, as the conflict does not serve the fundamental interests of either India or Pakistan, nor does it contribute to regional peace and stability, Wang said.

Subsequently, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 1 May followed by meeting President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday during which he said China understands "Pakistan's legitimate security concerns and supports its efforts to safeguard sovereignty and security interests".

He also called on both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint, meet each other halfway, properly manage differences, and jointly safeguard regional peace and stability while calling for an impartial probe, according to a press release from the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. *—PTI*

This is largely because China is keen to prevent Indo-Pakistan tensions from escalating beyond control, as it could threaten regional peace
PHOTO: PTI

Israel says it will seize Gaza, here's a look at Palestine's troubled past

Israel's Cabinet voted Monday to seize the Gaza Strip for an unspecified amount of time in a move that could see Israel reestablish control over a territory it vacated two decades ago.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 after a decades-long occupation and then imposed a blockade on the territory along with Egypt.

Israeli officials did not clarify Monday what a reoccupation of Gaza would entail, but the announcement raises the potential for the reestablishment of Israeli settlements inside the territory.

Details were not formally announced, and Israeli leaders have said the expansion of operations will not begin until after President Donald Trump's visit. The plan may be another measure by Israel to try to pressure Hamas into making concessions in ceasefire negotiations.

Seizing Gaza would further dim hopes for Palestinian statehood, embed Israel inside a population deeply hostile to it and raise questions about how Israel plans to govern the territory, especially as it considers how to implement President Donald Trump's vision to take over Gaza and resettle Palestinians elsewhere.

Palestinians see Gaza as an integral part of their future state, even if the rulers have changed over decades. Palestinian statehood on land that would include the territory has broad international support. Here's a look at the troubled modern history of the Gaza Strip: 1967 — 1993: Israel seizes control of Gaza from Egypt Israel seized control of Gaza from Egypt during the 1967 Mideast war, when it also captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem — areas that remain under Israeli control. The internationally recognised Palestinian Authority, which administers semi-autonomous areas of the occupied West Bank, seeks all three areas for a hoped-for future Palestinian state.

Israel built more than 20 Jewish settlements in Gaza during this period. It also signed a peace treaty with Egypt at Camp David — a pact negotiated by US President Jimmy Carter.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi referenced this 40-year-old treaty when he declined to permit Palestinian refugees from Gaza into Egypt, saying the potential entrance of militants into Egypt would threaten longstanding peace between Israel and Egypt.

The first Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation erupted in Gaza in December 1987, kicking off more than five years of sustained protests and bloody violence. It was also during this time that the Islamic militant group Hamas was established in Gaza.

Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip
PHOTO: PTI

1993 — 2005: The Palestinian Authority takes charge

For a time, promising peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders made the future of Gaza look somewhat hopeful. Following the Oslo accords, a set of agreements between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat that laid the groundwork for a two-state solution, control of Gaza was handed to the fledgling Palestinian Authority.

But the optimism was short lived. A series of Palestinian suicide attacks by Hamas militants, the 1995 assassination of Rabin by a Jewish ultranationalist opposed to his peacemaking, and the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister the following year all hindered US-led peace efforts. Another peace push collapsed in late 2000 with the eruption of the second Palestinian uprising.

As the uprising fizzled in 2005, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon led a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, uprooting all of Israel's troops and roughly 9,000 settlers in a move that bitterly divided Israel.

2005 — 2023: Hamas seizes power Just months after Israel's withdrawal, Hamas won parliamentary elections over Fatah, the long-dominant Palestinian political party. In 2007 after months of infighting, Hamas violently seized control of Gaza from the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority.

Israel and Egypt imposed a crippling blockade on the territory, monitoring the flow of goods and people in and out. For nearly two decades, the closure has crippled the local economy, sent unemployment skyrocketing, and emboldened militancy in Gaza, which is one of the most densely populated places on the planet.

2023 Hamas attack sparks the Israel-Hamas war

The 7 October, 2023, a Hamas attack on Israel killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and saw around 250 people taken hostage. Israel says 59 captives remain in Gaza, although about 35 are believed to be dead.

Since Israel ended a ceasefire with the Hamas militant group in mid-March, Israel has unleashed fierce strikes on the territory that have killed hundreds. It has captured swaths of territory and now controls roughly 50 per cent of Gaza. Before the truce ended, Israel halted all humanitarian aid into the territory, including food, fuel and water, setting off what is believed to the be the worst humanitarian crisis in nearly 19 months of war.

Israel's offensive has displaced more than 90 per cent of Gaza's population and killed more than 52,000 people there, many of them women and children, Palestinian health officials say. They do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

Still, some of the group's militants survived and were quick to emerge from hiding following the ceasefire. They were visible policing the streets and organizing sometimes-chaotic handovers of hostages.— ***PTI***

PHOTO: X

Jury awards Florida man $2.4M over faulty airbag

MIAMI, 6 MAY

A South Florida jury has awarded USD 2.4 million ($3 million) to Jose Hernandez, who was severely injured by a faulty Takata airbag during a 2020 crash. Hernandez was driving his 2005 Honda Civic in Miami when another car struck him as he attempted a left turn. Although the collision was minor, the airbag inflator exploded improperly, firing metal shrapnel into his right arm. He sued the Takata Airbag Tort Compensation Trust Fund in 2022. Takata's airbags, recalled globally since 2013, used ammonium nitrate, which can degrade in heat and humidity, causing violent explosions. At least 28 deaths and over 400 injuries in the US have been linked to the defect. Takata filed for bankruptcy in 2017. ***—AGENCIES***

Two Indian children missing in San Diego tragedy

NEW YORK, 6 MAY

Three people were killed, and seven others, including two Indian children, are missing after a small boat believed to be carrying migrants capsized off the coast near San Diego, California. The incident occurred on Monday, about 15 miles north of downtown San Diego, near Torrey Pines State Beach. The US Coast Guard found three deceased individuals and rescued four others, who were injured, ranging from mild to severe. After interviewing survivors, authorities confirmed that seven people were still missing. The Consulate General of India in San Francisco expressed sorrow over the tragedy, stating that the children's parents are receiving treatment at a local hospital. The Coast Guard is treating the incident as a suspected human smuggling operation. ***—PTI***

Woman found after disappearing for over 6 decades

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

62 years ago, Audrey Backeberg disappeared from a small city in south-central Wisconsin after reportedly hitchhiking with her family's babysitter and catching a bus to Indianapolis. Last week, the Sauk County Sheriff's Office announced that she had been found alive and safe in another state. Isaac Hanson, a detective with the sheriff's office discovered an out-of-state arrest record that matched Backeberg. He along with other officials met her family to find their connection with that region. They dug through Backeberg's sister's Ancestry.com account for further information. Within 2 months they located Backeberg, now in her 80's. He said she was safe and did not reveal details. ***—PTI***

8 killed in fiery highway crash in eastern Kansas

KANSAS, 6 MAY

Two vehicles have collided head-on and burst into flames on a two-lane highway in rural eastern Kansas, killing eight people, including a high school student, a teacher-coach and a school employee from Oklahoma. The crash occurred on 4 May on US 169 outside of Greeley, about 97 kilometers southwest of Kansas City, Missouri. One person escaped from a wrecked vehicle and was hospitalized. The victims included Booker T. Washington High School student Donald "DJ" Laster, former Carver Middle School coach, teacher Wayne Walls and Tulsa Public Schools transportation team member Ja'monGilstrap. The crash closed a section of the highway for four hours, with authorities still working at the crash site on 5 May. Investigations over cause of the crash is underway. ***—PTI***

Ukraine drone attacks shut down Moscow airports

Flights to four airports halted ahead of 9 May parade

MOSCOW, 6 MAY

Russian forces intercepted more than 100 Ukrainian drones fired at almost a dozen regions of Russia, the Defence Ministry in Moscow said Tuesday, in an attack that forced all four airports around Moscow to temporarily suspend flights ahead of 9 May Victory Day celebrations.

Nine other regional Russian airports also temporarily stopped operating as drones struck areas along the border with Ukraine and deeper inside Russia, according to Russia's civil aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, and the Defence Ministry. It was the second straight night that the Moscow region reportedly was targeted.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had announced unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in the more than three-year war to coincide with celebrations in Moscow marking Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II in 1945 which is Russia's biggest secular holiday. Ukraine had called for a larger ceasefire which Russia has rejected.

Ukrainian President Vlodomyr Zelensky had earlier refused to guarantee safety of foreign leaders attending Russia's Victory day Parade.

Moscow airports closed after drone attacks

PHOTO: X@EMMANUELOMENEJO

"We cannot be responsible for your security and therefore will not give you any guarantess," Zelenskyy said according to Agencies.

Foreign leaders who have confirmed their attendance at the Victory Day festivities in Moscow include China's President Xi Jinping, described by Putin as "our main guest."

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, another top ally whom Putin has courted, had been expected in Moscow but he cancelled his trip amid tensions with Pakistan.

According to unverified Russian reports, 2 people were injured in the Kursk region, and some damage was reported in the Voronezh region.

Meanwhile, Russian forces overnight fired at least 20 Shahed drones at Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near Russia wounding 7, Ukraine officials said. *—PTI*

- Russian President Vladimir Putin had announced a 72-hour ceasefire to coincide with Moscow's Victory Day parade, the country's biggest secular holiday.

Merz wins vote to become Germany's tenth chancellor

BERLIN, 6 MAY

Germany's conservative leader Friedrich Merz won on Tuesday a nail-biter second vote in parliament to become the country's tenth chancellor after he lost the first round in a stunning early setback.

Merz, 69, scored an absolute majority of 325 against 289 in the secret vote in the lower house of parliament. Earlier in the day, Merz's first bid to become Germany's chancellor failed in shocking defeat as he had been widely expected to win smoothly.

A candidate for chancellor has never failed to win on the first ballot since the end of the war. Merz received only 310 votes well short of 328 needed in the 630 seat Bundestag, the German lower house of Parliamen exposing the deep divisions in the alliance and throwing the country into a political crisis.

Germany's new coalition led by Merz's centre-right Christian Democratic Union, its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, and the centre-left Social Democrats, seeks to spur economic growth, ramp up defence spending, take a tougher approach to migration and catch up on long-neglected modernisation. The bittersweet victory has had political analysts cast doubt on his ability to pursue his agenda damaging his political authority domestically and nationally.

Merz is seeking to take the helm of the 27-nation European Union's most populous member has the continent's biggest economy. Added to his problems would be the rise of far-right, anti-immigrant party Alternative for Germany party known as AfD which cheered when Merz initially lost in the first round of voting and called for him to step down from his post. *—PTI*

Israel pounds Houthi rebels day after airport strike

An Israeli mobile artillery unit fires a shell from southern Israel towards the Gaza Strip, in a position near the Israel-Gaza border ***PHOTO: PTI***

JERUSALEM, 6 MAY

Israel's military targeted Houthi rebels in Yemen's Red Sea province of Hodeida on Monday with a punishing round of airstrikes, killing at least one person and wounding 35.

The strikes came a day after the Iranian-backed rebels launched a missile that hit Israel's main airport hours before Israeli cabinet meet on expanding war on Gaza. The Israeli military said more than 20 Israeli fighter planes took part in the operation, dropping more than 50 munitions on dozens of targets.

The rebels' media office said at least six strikes hit the crucial Hodeida port Monday afternoon other strikes hit a cement factory in the Bajil district, of Hodeida city.

Hodeida residents said they heard explosions at the port, with flames and smoke seen rising over the area. In Bajil, fires and thick columns of smoke were seen over the cement factory. The Houthi-run health ministry said where at least one person was killed and 35 others were wounded in the Israeli strikes on the factory. It said rescuers were still searching for missing people.

Nasruddin Amer, head of the Houthi media office vowed to respond to the attack and said it will continue targeting shipping routes and Israel until it stops the war in Gaza.

The Houthis claimed the attacks were US-Israeli joint operations but the US has refuted this. Separately, the US military launched multiple strikes Monday on Sanaa, another US official said.

Meanwhile, Israeli military bulldozers demolished most of a Palestinian Bedouin village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Monday, leaving residents wandering amid the rubble of their homes. The Israeli forces are set to demolish over 100 homes across two northern refugee camps in the West Bank. *—PTI*

SRI LANKA LOCAL POLLS, A TEST FOR RULING PARTY AMID ECONOMIC CRISIS

COLOMBO, 6 MAY

Polling began on Tuesday across Sri Lanka for long-delayed local government elections, seen as a major electoral test for the ruling National People's Power (NPP) led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. Voting runs from 7am to 4pm at 13,759 polling stations, with over 17.1 million eligible voters electing 8,287 members to 339 local bodies.

More than 75,000 candidates from 49 political parties and 257 independent groups are contesting. A minimum of 10 per cent women and 25 per cent youth representation is mandated. Polls were repeatedly postponed amid the 2022 economic crisis and subsequent political unrest. The Supreme Court later ordered the elections to proceed.

Dissanayake, who narrowly won the 2024 elections has faced criticism for continuing IMF-backed austerity measures. *—PTI*

TRUMP VS VARSITY

No new grants for Harvard until White House demands met

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

Harvard University will receive no new federal grants until it meets a series of demands from President Donald Trump's administration, the Education Department announced Monday.

The action was laid out in a letter to Harvard's president and amounts to a major escalation of Trump's battle with the Ivy League school. The administration previously froze USD 2.2 billion in federal grants to Harvard, and Trump is pushing to strip the school of its tax-exempt status.

In a press call, an Education Department official said Harvard will receive no new federal grants until it "demonstrates responsible management of the university" and satisfies federal demands on a range of subjects. It applies to federal research grants and not federal financial aid students receive to help cover tuition and fees, an education department official told the Associated Press.

The official accused Harvard of "serious failures" in four areas: antisemitism, racial discrimination, abandonment of rigor and viewpoint diversity. To become eligible for new grants, Harvard would need to enter into negotiations with the federal government and prove it has satisfied the administration's demands.

Harvard's president has previously said he will not bend to government's demands. The university sued to halt its funding freeze last month. *—PTI*

Hegseth directs 20% cut in military leadership

Washington, 6 May

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday directed the active duty military to shed 20% of its four-star general officers to remove 'redundant force structure to optimise and streamline leadership' but critics worry it could result in a more politicised force. The cuts are on top of firing of more than a half-dozen top general officers including two women four-star officers and many senior female officer in January. In the earlier rounds of firing, Hegseth said the eliminations were "a reflection of the president wanting the right people around him to execute the national security approach we want to take." *– PTI*

Former B'desh PM Khaleda Zia returns home after treatment

DHAKA, 6 MAY

Bangladesh's ailing former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Tuesday returned to the country from London following four months of medical treatment.

Khaleda, 79 underwent advanced medical care at The London Clinic. After her discharge, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson resided at her eldest son Tarique Rahman's residence.

An air ambulance carrying the two-time prime minister, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10.42am. She suffered from liver cirrhosis, kidney disease, heart problems, diabetes, and arthritis.

Khaleda Zia ***PHOTO:PTI***

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and several senior party leaders received Khaleda at the airport.

Fakhrul hoped that her return would facilitate restoration and advancement of democracy in the country.

Security has been tightened around the walled compound of Khaleda's Gulshan residence. A large number of police, army and anti-terror forces were deployed on the roads and near the airport.

In March, Bangladesh's Supreme Court acquitted Khaleda in the Zia Charitable Trust a corruption case in which she had been sentenced to seven years imprisonment and fined Taka 1 million.

She was also acquitted in the Zia Orphanage Trust case.

The Awami League government in 2020 temporarily released her from jail after she had been lodged in the Old Dhaka Central Jail since 2018, with conditions that she would not leave the country. Khaleda was freed by President Mohammed Shahabuddin's order in 2024. *—PTI*

B'desh court orders arrest of detained ISCKON leader

DHAKA, 6 MAY

A Bangladesh court on Tuesday ordered the arrest of detained Hindu ISCKON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in four more cases.

The court took a similar action against him on 5 May in assistant government prosecutor Saiful Islam Alif's murder. The Chattogram metropolitan magistrate issued the order virtually. Das was arrested at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in 2024 over alleged defamation of the national flag.

His bail petition was rejected, leading to his arrest, sparing widespread protests in Dhaka and other places. Das was accused of attacks on lawyers and justice seekers. *—PTI*

PULITZER PRIZE

'James' author wins in fiction category

NEW YORK, 6 MAY

Percival Everett's novel "James," his radical re-imagining of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" from the perspective of the enslaved title character, has won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. "Purpose," Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' drawing-room drama about an accomplished Black family destroying itself from within, won for drama. It also earned six Tony Award nominations last week.

Everett's Pulitzer confirmed the million-selling "James" as the most celebrated and popular US literary novel of 2024, and accelerated the 68-year-old author's remarkable rise after decades of being little known to the general public. His racial and publishing satire "Erasure," released in 2001, was adapted into the Oscar-nominated 2023 film.

The Pulitzer citation called "James" an 'accomplished reconsideration' that illustrates 'the absurdity of racial supremacy and provide a new take on the search for family and freedom.' Everett said in a statement he was "shocked and pleased, but mostly shocked. This is a wonderful honor."

"Purpose" was praised in its citation as "a skillful blend of drama and comedy that probes how different generations define heritage." Jacobs-Jenkins had been twice nominated for a drama Pulitzer, for "Everybody" in 2018 and "Gloria" in 2016. He won the Tony Award for best play revival in 2024 for "Appropriate." *—PTI*

PRIZE WINNERS

ARTS

Music: Sky Islands, by Susie Ibarra

Poetry: New and Selected Poems, by Marie Howe

Biography award: Jason Roberts for 'Every Living Thing: The Great and Deadly Race to Know All Life'

General non-fiction: Benjamin Nathans' 'To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Sovi-et Dissident Movement'

HISTORY

'Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom During the Civil War' by Edda L. Fields-Black

'Native Nations: A Millennium in North America', by Kathleen DuVal

JOURNALISM

- NYT wins Pulitzers 4 categories including Breaking News and Photography
- Washington Post won Pulitzer in Breaking news category
- Wall Street Journal won under National reporting category
- Reuters received the Pulitzer for Investigative Reporting
- The New Yorker won prizes in 3 categories including Commentary, feature writing and Audio reporting

Romania appoints interim leader after poll setback

BUCHAREST, 6 MAY

Romania's interim president Ilie Bolojan appointed Interior Minister Cătălin Predoiu as interim prime minister on Tuesday, following the resignation of Marcel Ciolacu. Ciolacu stepped down after his coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu, failed to make the presidential runoff in Sunday's first-round vote. Predoiu, a veteran politician from the National Liberal Party, will lead the government for up to 45 days, during which executive powers remain limited.

The political shake-up follows a rerun of the presidential election, held after the top court annulled the previous vote over allegations of irregularities and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied. The results highlighted a growing anti-establishment mood, with nationalist George Simion and pro-EU reformist Nicuşor Dan advancing to the runoff set for 18 May.

Ciolacu admitted the ruling coalition, made up of his Social Democratic Party (PSD), the National Liberals, UDMR, and minority representatives, had lost credibility. This marks only the second time in Romania's post-communist history that PSD failed to make the final round. As economic discontent rises, the vote may signal a profound shift in Romania's geopolitical future. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

Gold up ₹2,400 to ₹99,750/10gm on strong demand

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Gold prices surged Rs 2,400 to Rs 99,750 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday due to persistent buying by jewellers and stocks, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Monday, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at Rs 97,350 per 10g. Extending the gains for the third straight day, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 2,400 to Rs 99,300 per 10g on Tuesday. It had closed at Rs 96,900 per 10 grams in the previous close. Meanwhile, the most traded June contract for gold futures rallied Rs 1,951, or 2.06 per cent, to Rs 96,600 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange. Globally, spot gold sprinted higher by USD 45.65, or 1.37 per cent, to USD 3,379.77 per ounce. —*PTI*

Rupee falls 15P, closes at ₹84.45 against USD

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

The rupee settled for the day 15 paise lower at 84.45 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, amid growing uncertainty and a cautious recalibration of risk appetite. According to forex traders, the USD/INR pair was supported by an overall decline in crude oil prices and sustained foreign fund inflows, while ongoing geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan weighed on investor sentiments, keeping the rupee on edge. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 84.28 and moved between an intra-day high of 84.26 and a low of 84.63 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 84.45 (provisional), registering a fall of 15 paise over its previous closing level. —*PTI*

Celcius Logistics raises ₹250 cr in funding round

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

Third-party logistics operator Celcius Logistics on Tuesday said it has raised Rs 250 crore in an oversubscribed Series B round through a combination of equity investment, debt financing, and secondary transactions. This funding will help the company expand its network to more than 1,000 cities in the country and enhance its technology platform to meet the growing demand for temperature-sensitive logistics across multiple sectors, Celcius said. Recently, Celcius has made significant inroads into pharmaceutical logistics for safe and efficient transportation of critical medical supplies nationwide, according to the company. In May last year, the end-to-end cold chain solutions provider raised Rs 40 crore in a pre-series B round. Set up in 2020, the company now operates in over 600. —*PTI*

EV maker JBM Auto Q4 profit goes up by 20%

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

Automotive and electric vehicle maker JBM Auto on Tuesday reported a 20 per cent annual growth in consolidated profit after tax at Rs 66 crore in January-March 2025 quarter. The company had posted a consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs 54.90 crore in the last quarter of FY24. Net sales including other operating income during the quarter under review rose 10.75 per cent to Rs 1,645.70 crore from Rs 1,485.95 crore in Q4FY24, the company said in a statement. Earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation (EBIDTA) stood at Rs 213.60 crore in the fourth quarter of previous fiscal as against Rs 177.18 crore in Q4FY24, registering an year-on-year growth of 20.56 per cent, JBM Auto said. —*PTI*

Moody's cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 6.3%

Says global economies will slide because of US uncertainty

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday cut India's GDP growth projections for 2025 to 6.3 per cent, from 6.5 per cent, saying economies globally will see a slowdown on account of heightened US policy uncertainty and trade restrictions.

In its Global Macro Outlook 2025-26, Moody's said geopolitical stresses, like tension between India and Pakistan, also have a potential downside risk to its baseline growth forecasts. Costs to investors and businesses are likely to rise as they factor in new geopolitical configurations when deciding where to invest, expand, and/or source goods, Moody's said.

Moody's cut India's growth projections to 6.3 per cent for 2025 calendar year, but retained it at 6.5 per cent for 2026. This compares with a 6.7 per cent growth in 2024.

Moody's said geopolitical stresses, such as the ongoing tension between India and Pakistan, also have a potential downside risk to its baseline growth forecasts *PHOTO: X*

Moody's expects the Reserve Bank of India to lower benchmark policy rates further to support growth.

"Economic growth was already set to slow this year back to its potential rate. We lowered our global growth projections for 2025 and 2026 further on account of the policy shifts and more intense policy uncertainty than we had previously expected, especially in the largest two economies, the US and China," Moody's said.

Stating that policy uncertainty is further slowing growth in 2025, Moody's said it is likely to take a toll on consumer, business, and financial activity. Despite a pause and reduction in some tariffs, policy uncertainty and trade tensions, especially between the US and China, are likely to dampen global trade and investment with consequences across the G-20.

Geopolitical stresses are another potential downside risk to Moody's baseline forecasts. In recent days, tensions have flared up between India and Pakistan in South Asia and China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

These join unresolved wars in Russia and Ukraine as well as the conflict in the Middle East. —*PTI*

Markets close lower amid India–Pak border tensions

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower in a range-bound trade on Tuesday due to profit booking, mainly in banking and oil shares, and investors staying on the sideline amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.

Snapping its two days of gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 155.77 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 80,641.07. During the day, it dropped 315.81 points or 0.39 per cent to 80,481.03.

The NSE Nifty dipped 81.55 points or 0.33 per cent to 24,379.60.

The trading activity was range bound ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision and concerns over US-China trade negotiations, analysts said.

The Union Home Ministry has directed states and UTs to hold mock drills in light of the rising Indo-Pak tensions after the Pahalgam terror attack.

States and UTs are told to hold mock drills in light of the rising Indo-Pak tensions after the Pahalgam terror attack *PHOTO: PTI*

Close to 300 "civil defence district" with sensitive installations like nuclear plants, military bases, refineries, and hydroelectric dams will be covered by mock drills on air-raid warning sirens, civilian training for a "hostile attack" and cleaning of bunkers and trenches.

Among Sensex firms, Eternal, Tata Motors, State Bank of India, Adani Ports, NTPC, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Axis Bank and Sun Pharma were the major losers.

Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, Nestle and Maruti were among the gainers. —*PTI*

The stock started at Rs 326.05, up 1.57 per cent from the issue price on the BSE and climbed 3.70 per cent to Rs 332.90 *PHOTO: X @TOCKTWITSINDIA*

Ather shares register 2% climb in debut trade

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Shares of electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy Ltd on Tuesday listed with a premium of over 2 per cent against the issue price of Rs 321.

The stock started the trade at Rs 326.05, up 1.57 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, it climbed 3.70 per cent to Rs 332.90.

At the NSE, it listed at Rs 328, a premium of 2.18 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 12,110.53 crore.

In the equity market, the 30-share BSE benchmark gauge was trading 238.61 points lower at 80,549.43. The NSE Nifty was quoted 81.05 points down at 24,380.10.

Ather Energy's initial public offer got subscribed 1.43 times on the closing day of bidding on Wednesday, backed by oversubscription in QIB and retail investor categories.

The Rs 2,981-crore initial share sale had a price band of Rs 304-321 apiece. —*PTI*

VEHICLE SALES TO SEE SINGLE-DIGIT GROWTH: REPORT

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The auto sector may see a low single-digit growth in the Financial Year 2026 for commercial vehicle players, says a report by Axis Security.

Commercial and passenger vehicle sales for the month of March witnessed a mixed trend, as shown by the figures released by the automotive manufacturers.

The report says rural recovery, new model launches and potential government support for consumption through middle-class tax relief will be key drivers for the tractor industry. It adds that the IMD's forecast of an above-normal southwest monsoon is also a major tailwind for the agriculture sector and tractor demand.

In April 2025, domestic passenger vehicle sales grew by 6-7 per cent year-on-year, supported by strong performance from Toyota, Mahindra, JSW MG and Kia. —*ANI*

SERVICES SECTOR GROWS SLIGHTLY IN APRIL

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's service sector activity showed a slight acceleration in April, primarily due to a faster increase in new order inflows, according to a monthly survey released on Tuesday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose to 58.7 in April from 58.5 in March, indicating robust expansion in service sector output, well above its long-term average of 54.2.

Commenting on the results, Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, noted a revival in new export orders, which grew at the fastest rate since July 2024. The expansion in output was supported by significant increases in new business across various sectors, with improved international demand from regions including Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the US.

In response to the increased client demand, companies continued to expand their workforce for the thirty-fifth consecutive month. Additionally, firms raised their average selling prices to offset rising costs, with inflation in charges exceeding its long-term average. However, while optimism about future growth remained, business confidence levels fell to their lowest in nearly two years, as competition concerns weighed on expectations.

Private sector sales and output also showed improvements, as reflected in the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index, which increased from 59.5 in March to 59.7 in April. —*PTI*

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs ordered the investigation last week under Section 210 of the Companies Act, 2013 *PHOTO: X @GENSOLENG*

Ministry orders probe against Gensol, BluSmart

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has initiated an investigation into Gensol Engineering and BluSmart Mobility for suspected violations of company law, officials have confirmed. The scrutiny follows allegations of fund diversion and corporate governance failures at Gensol Engineering, which came to light after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) imposed restrictions on the company's promoters, Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi, prohibiting them from participating in securities markets due to multiple infractions.

The probe was ordered last week under Section 210 of the Companies Act, 2013, which grants the authority to probe a company's affairs under various grounds, including those serving public interest. The move was influenced by SEBI's ruling on 15 April on allegations that the Gensol promoters misappropriated funds for personal use, raising serious concerns about financial misconduct and corporate governance. —*PTI*

GENSOL SHARES IN FREE-FALL FOR 18TH DAY

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Shares of crisis-hit Gensol Engineering were beaten down for the 18th straight day on Tuesday and hit a fresh lower circuit limit.

The stock tanked 4.99 per cent to Rs 66.97 -- the lowest trading permissible limit for the day as also a 52-week low -- on the BSE.

On the NSE, shares of the firm dropped 5 per cent to hit the lower circuit as well as a 52-week low level of Rs 66.25.

In its 18 days of continuous fall, the stock has tumbled 59 per cent.

From the 52-week high of Rs 1,125.75, the stock has lost 94 per cent.

The corporate affairs ministry has ordered a probe into the affairs of crisis-hit Gensol Engineering and BluSmart Mobility for alleged violations of companies law, according to officials. —*PTI*

TCS pays 70% staffers full quarterly allowance

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Tata Consultancy Services has paid out 100 per cent of the Quarterly Variable Allowance (QVA) to more than 70 per cent of its workforce for the January -March quarter.

TCS said for employees in other grades, the QVA payout is determined by the performance of their respective business units, which is consistent with TCS's established policy across quarters. "We have paid out 100 per cent QVA to over 70 per cent of the company. For all other grades, the QVA depends on their unit's business performance. This is in line with our standard practice across quarters," it said.

TCS reported a 1.7 per cent decline in the March quarter net profit to Rs 12,224 crore, driven largely by a margin contraction.

It logged a total revenue of Rs 64,479 crore in Q4 FY25, up 5.3 per cent over the year-ago period.

The company added 625 employees in the quarter, bringing its total workforce to over 6 lakh.

While announcing its Q4 and FY25 earnings last month, TCS had said that it would be deferring annual wage hikes to its 6.07 lakh employees due to the business uncertainties triggered by the tariff issues.

The company's chief human resources officer Milind Lakkad cited business uncertainties for the delay in annual wage hikes, which generally set in from April. —*PTI*

5 firms get SEBI's approval for IPOs

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has granted approval to five companies, including Veritas Finance, Laxmi India Finance, and Ajay Poly, to proceed with their initial public offerings (IPOs). This update follows the regulator's observations, granted from 29-30 April, after the companies submitted their preliminary IPO papers in December and January.

Veritas Finance plans to raise Rs 2,800 crore through its IPO, comprising a fresh issue of Rs 600 crore in equity shares and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of Rs 2,200 crore by various investors. Laxmi India Finance's IPO will feature 1.04 crore newly issued shares alongside an OFS of 56.38 lakh shares from promoters. Ajay Poly intends to raise Rs 238 crore through a mix of fresh shares and an OFS of 93 lakh shares.

Regaal Resources aims for Rs 190 crore through its IPO, which includes a fresh issue and an OFS of nine million shares. Jajoo Rashmi Refractories will seek Rs 150 crore exclusively through a fresh issue. In contrast, Earthood Services withdrew its IPO documents on 28 April after initially filing on 6 January. —*PTI*

INDIAN FILMS MAY TAKE A TOLL

'Trump tariffs on films will dent showbiz'

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

US President Donald Trump's announcement threatening 100 per cent tariff on movies produced outside and coming to the US will impact the box office business of Indian films and may lead to an increase in ticket prices for Indian films, say producers in India.

Though there is little clarity just yet, the fear is that it will impact the footfall for Indian movies screened in the US, according to a section of industry insiders, including Shibasish Sarkar, president of the Producers Guild of India, filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri and exhibitor-distributor Akshay Rathi.

Indian films gross around over Rs 800 crore at the US box office, he said. In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said on Sunday that he has authorised the Department of Commerce and the Office of the US Trade Representative to slap a 100 per cent tariff "on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands".

However, Trump's tariff threat may not influence the movie production as most Indian producers find US an expensive location to shoot.

According to the veteran filmmaker, most Indian films are not even shot in the US because it's an expensive affair.

Another major Indian producer, who didn't wish to be named, echoed Bhatt.

"Our films are not shot in the US. Indian films are usually shot in the UK, Mauritius or Malaysia, and other countries. Wherever we get a subsidy, we go and shoot there," he said. According to director Shekhar Kapur, Trump's move could backfire and instead push Hollywood filmmakers to leave the country. —*PTI*

Akshay Rathi, Vivek Agnihotri, Shibasish Sarkar. *PHOTO: PTI*

ELECTRIC PV RETAIL SALES UP 56.87%

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Total electric passenger vehicle retail sales in India grew by 56.87 per cent in April this year to 12,233 units compared to 7,798 units in the same month last year, according to the latest data released by FADA.

Tata Motors continued to lead the market with 4,436 units of electric PVs sold last month, although JSW MG Motor India and Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) are catching up with 3,462 units and 2,979 units respectively, as per the Federation of Automotive Dealers Associations (FADA) data collated as on May 2, 2025.

In the same month last year, Tata Motors retailed 5,177 units of electric PVs, JSW MG Motor India 1,268 units and M&M 668 units.

Hyundai Motor India clocked sales of 677 electric PVs last month compared to just 91 units in April 2024.

In the electric two-wheeler segment, total retail sales grew 40.02 per cent at 91,791 units last month as compared to 65,555 units in April 2024. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

'Largest' indoor Pickleball-Padel facility in B'luru

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

Pickleball arena chain, GoRally, on Tuesday said it has unveiled its flagship facility 'GoRally Whitefield', spanning 35,000 square feet in Bengaluru. This cutting-edge indoor arena is the largest of its kind in India, featuring 10 world-class pickleball courts and 2 FIP (Federation Internationale de Padel)-approved padel courts, it claimed. Strategically located in Thubarahalli, Whitefield, the facility caters to players of all skill levels, from beginners to professionals, GoRally said in a release. "Our vision is to build an ecosystem where pickleball and Padel thrive not just as a casual pastime, but as competitive sports with a dedicated community," Sam Sancheti, Co-Founder of GoRally, said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Sinner returns from doping ban to great fanfare

ROME, 6 MAY

Rarely has an athlete been welcomed back from a doping ban with so much fanfare. Top-ranked tennis player Jannik Sinner was treated to a stadium filled with nearly 5,000 fans for his first practice session at the Italian Open on Monday, the day his three-month banishment from the sport expired. The training session, which was shown live on local TV, came after Sinner was the most celebrated player in a ceremony to honor the Italian teams that swept the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup last year. *—PTI*

Jovic and Emilio Nava earn USTA wild-card entries

ORLANDO, 6 MAY

Iva Jovic, a 17-year-old, and Emilio Nava, a 23-year-old, claimed French Open wild-card invitations from the U.S. Tennis Association on Monday by finishing atop the standings based on points earned at tournaments across five weeks. Jovic will participate in her third consecutive Grand Slam event; she reached the second round at the U.S. Open last September and the Australian Open in January. She is ranked 120th this week. At Flushing Meadows, Jovic, then 16, became the youngest American to win a women's main-draw match at the U.S. Open since 2000. *—PTI*

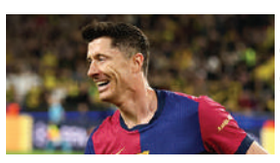


PHOTO: X

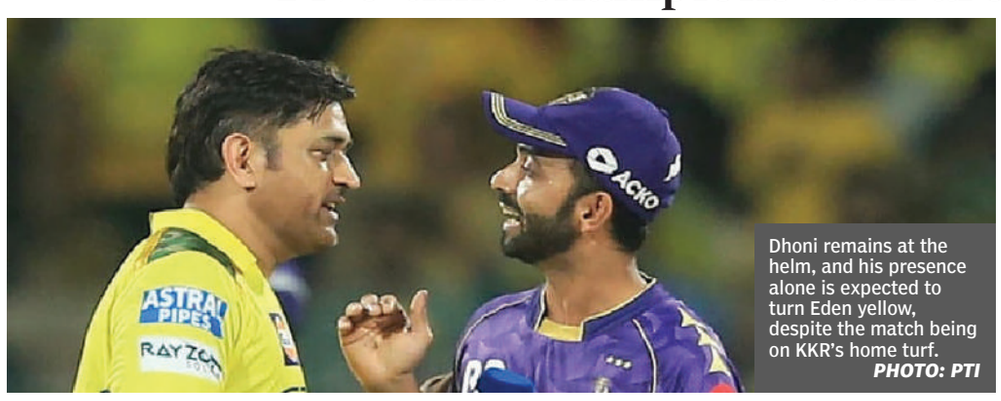
Lewandowski back in Barcelona squad for CL semi

MILAN, 6 MAY

Barcelona is getting a boost in attack with the return of Lewandowski against Inter Milan for the Champions League semifinal second leg on Tuesday. Lewandowski was included in the squad on Monday for the trip to Milan after being sidelined for about two weeks because of a left thigh injury. The striker missed four games, including last week's thrilling first leg against Inter in Barcelona, a 3-3 draw. Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said Lewandowski would start from the bench. *—PTI*

Dhoni's possible final hurrah at Eden Gardens

Five-time champions CSK are already out of the playoff race



Dhoni remains at the helm, and his presence alone is expected to turn Eden yellow, despite the match being on KKR's home turf. PHOTO: PTI

KOLKATA, 6 MAY

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's possible final hurrah at the Eden Gardens will be a captivating subplot when Kolkata Knight Riders square off against Chennai Super Kings in a must-win clash here on Wednesday in front of a crowd expected to be draped in yellow. While five-time champions CSK are already out of the playoff race, Dhoni remains at the helm, and his presence alone is expected to turn Eden yellow, despite the match being on KKR's home turf.

For a city where Dhoni has deep personal ties, his in-laws live here, where he played much of his junior cricket. Wednesday could end up being emotionally charged for both the 43-year-old and his fans.

The Eden Gardens has witnessed many of Dhoni's milestones, from his maiden first-class century to two of his six Test hundreds. He has also played club cricket here, including a memorable P Sen Trophy final for Shambazar Club. So, when the iconic No.7 walks out on 7 May, many will wonder if it's the last time Dhoni plays at this historic venue.

Dhoni, who took responsibility for CSK's narrow two-run loss to RCB in their previous match, is no longer the dominant force he once was.

Despite being in a strong position at 172/2 while chasing 214, CSK fell short in the final over.

Dhoni was dismissed by Yash Dayal off the third ball of the last over, managing 12 runs off 8 balls. *—PTI*

CSK VS KKR

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	29
CSK Won:	19
KKR Won:	10

CSK vs KKR Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

> **Didn't say I was backing aggressive approach, conditions at home weren't as we expected**
>
>
>
> -Daniel Vettori, SRH head coach

> **The presence of Arshdeep Singh, Sai Sudharsan, and Kuldeep Yadav is a must in the squad for the five-match Test series in England beginning on 20 June.**
>
> -MSK Prasad, Former India chief selector

Captaincy became too much in the end: Virat

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The constant pressure of leading India and Royal Challengers Bengaluru for nearly a decade and the relentless scrutiny around his batting "became too much in the end" for Virat Kohli, who says he stepped down from leadership to be in a "happy space".

Kohli resigned as T20 captain after the World Cup in 2021, following which he also relinquished RCB's leadership role. A year later, he quit Test captaincy following the defeat to South Africa.

Kohli said he reached a point in his career where the constant attention became unbearable. "At one point, it did become tough for me because there was just too much happening in my career. I was captaining India for 7-8 years. I captained RCB for nine years. There were expectations on me from a batting perspective every game that I played," said Kohli in an 'RCB Bold Diaries' podcast. "I didn't have this sense that the attention was off me. If it wasn't captaincy, it would be batting. I was exposed to it 24x7. It did get very tough on me, and it did get too much in the end." *—PTI*

KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES 2025

Gold medallist Maharashtra's Prachi Gaikwad, silver medallist Karnataka's Tillotama, and bronze medallist Karnataka's Anushka pose for photos during the 50m Rifle 3 Positions (Youth Women) event held at the Karni Singh Shooting Range in Delhi on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

GUKESH BACK IN ACTION IN SUPERBET CLASSIC

BUCHAREST, 6 MAY

World Champion D Gukesh will be the top seeded player at the Superbet Classic, where the young chess wizard will have the opportunity to cross the 2800 rating mark for the first time in his career. The tournament, starting Wednesday, is the first event under classical chess in the Grand Chess Tour this year.

Gukesh, ranked third in the world on ratings, will have his task cut out as all nine Tour participants compete in the first tournament together. The wild card has been awarded to Deac Bogdan-Daniel as part of the host country. *—PTI*

WOMEN'S TRI-SERIES

India eye final berth as South Africa aim for survival

COLOMBO, 6 MAY

India will be eager to bounce back from their loss and confirm their spot in the final when they face a struggling South African side in the women's Tri-series here on Wednesday.

Harmanpreet Kaur and her team saw their eight-match winning streak come to an end on Sunday with a rare defeat to hosts Sri Lanka.

While India is still well-placed to reach the final thanks to a superior net run rate of 0.433 built on dominant performances in their opening two games, they will look to seal it with a convincing win on Wednesday.

The 'Women in Blue' are perched on top of the points table, having earned four points from three outings. They are ahead of second-placed Sri Lanka, who also have four points but an inferior NRR of -0.166, while winless South Africa are last, although the Proteas women have played a game less.

India's batting has been a major positive in the series. Opener Pratika Rawal has led the charge with 163 runs, including two half-centuries, and currently tops the run-scorers' chart. Other batters have also contributed to the cause. Sneh Rana has been the stand-out bowler not only for India but also in the series. She has snared 11 wickets in three games, bowling at an economy of 4.25, which is second best behind South Africa pace all-rounder Nadine de Klerk (4.06). *—PTI*

India Women's National Cricket Team players celebrate a wicket PHOTO: X @BCCIWOMEN

Zhao Xintong: China's First World Snooker Champion

TAIPEI, 6 MAY

Zhao Xintong became the first Chinese player to win the World Snooker Champion ship as the qualifier completed his stunning march to the title with an 18-12 victory against Mark Williams in the final on Monday. Zhao made history at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre by taking the seven frames he required to clinch the trophy after building a dominant 11-6 lead in Sunday's sessions. The 28-year-old was only China's second World Championship finalist, emulating Ding Junhui's run to the 2016 showpiece. But while Ding was beaten by Mark Selby in the final nine years ago, Zhao produced a nerveless display to defeat three-time champion Williams. He banked GBP 500,000 (USD 663,000) in prize money, earning immortality as Asia's first World Championship winner."I can't believe what I've done. It's very exciting," Zhao said. "I was so nervous tonight. —PTI

Indian shuttlers falter in Taipei Open qualifiers

TAIPEI, 6 MAY

YONEX TAIPEI OPEN 2025

Young Indian shuttlers failed to make a mark as none of them could progress to the main draw of the singles events at the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Tuesday.

Manraj Singh, Raghu Mariswamy, and Mansi Singh showed early promise with opening-round wins in the singles qualification but fell short in their respective second-round matches.

Manraj suffered a narrow 21-9, 19-21, 20-22 loss to Malaysia's Tan Jia Jie, while Raghu went down 16-21, 17-21 to Indonesia's Moh Zaki Ubaidillah in men's singles. Mansi, competing in women's singles, was outplayed 17-21, 10-21 by Thailand's Pitchamon Opatniputh.

Earlier, Raghu had staged a comeback win over Macau's Pui Pang Fong 14-21, 21-16, 21-14, while Manraj got the better of local shuttler Cheng Kai 19-21, 21-13, 21-11. Mansi had edged past Chinese Taipei's Tsai Hsin-Pei 22-20, 14-21, 21-17.

Among others, Aryamann Tandon lost 27-25, 10-21, 8-21 to Malaysia's Kok Jing Hong, while Mithun Manjunath went down 21-17, 19-21, 9-21 to Tan Jia Jie in the men's singles qualifiers.

In women's singles, Isharani Baruah, Ira Sharma and Shreya Lele also bowed out in the opening round. *—PTI*

ARCHERY WORLD CUP: INDIA DOMINATES COMPOUND QUALIFICATION

SHANGHAI, 6 MAY

India dominated the qualification round of the Archery World Cup Stage 2 in the compound section, with the men's and women's teams securing the top spots in the team rankings, here on Tuesday.

Veteran Abhishek Verma (714 points) and Rishabh Yadav (713) finished second and third, respectively, in the individual men's ranking round, while Ojas Deotale (707) was also placed in the top 10, helping India finish first in the men's team standings.

With a combined score of 2134, India edged past South Korea (2132) to secure a direct berth in the quarterfinals. In the women's compound section, Madhura

Dhamangaonkar, making a comeback after three years, delivered a stellar performance with a career-best 708 points, improving on her previous best of 683 to finish third in qualification.

Multiple World Cup gold medallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam scored 705 to be placed sixth, while World Cup debutant Chikitha Taniparthi (701) was ranked 11th. *—PTI*

Bibiano announces 23-member squad for SAFF U19 C'ship

ITANAGAR, 6 MAY

Head coach Bibiano Fernandes announced a 23-member India squad for the SAFF U19 Championship, which will be held in Arunachal Pradesh from 9-18 May.

The Blue Colts arrived in Itanagar on April 30 with a 25-member probables squad and have been training in the city ahead of the subcontinental tournament, after an initial camp in Bengaluru.

Fernandes said, "We started more than a month back in Bengaluru with around 50 scouted players, who appeared for the trials.

I was not surprised when I saw the talent that these boys have.

"I was really happy with the quality of scouting conducted to find these players. It has been a long process of building the team from there on."

The 48-year-old, who had won SAFF junior championships on three different occasions, stressed the importance of the acclimatisation period given to the team.

"It was nice of the federation to get us here early to acclimatise to the altitude, the ground, the weather, and everything else.

India have been drawn in Group B of the championship, alongside Nepal and Sri Lanka, and begin their campaign on 9 May against the latter, at the Golden Jubilee Stadium. *—PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HOPES FADE

Nottingham draws with Crystal Palace

LONDON, 6 MAY

Nottingham Forest drew with Crystal Palace 1-1 in the Premier League on Monday and saw its Champions League hopes fade.

Nuno Espírito Santo's men have spent most of the year in the league top three, but a run of one win in four has dropped them behind Chelsea, Newcastle, and a resurgent Manchester City.

A win at Selhurst Park would have brought them equal with Chelsea and Newcastle, but one point means it stays in sixth, with the top five qualifying for next season's Champions League.

Neither team was able to take control of a sometimes scrappy match that saw eight names go in the referee's book.

Crystal Palace's Maxence Lacroix, left, and Nottingham Forest's Chris Wood battle for the ball during the match between PHOTO: X / @NFFC

Palace took the lead with a penalty kick after an hour. After a video review, Matz Sels was adjudged to have felled Tyrick Mitchell, and Eberechi Eze made no mistake from the spot.

Forest bounced right back within four minutes, Murillo doing enough to deflect a goal-bound shot from Neco Williams away from the keeper. Eze hitting the woodwork in the dying seconds and Eddie Nketiah having a goal disallowed for offside in stoppage time meant FA Cup finalist Palace has not won any of its last five league games.

"We were unlucky in a few situations, hitting the post, the offside call, but they fought, and in many situations we created," Palace coach Oliver Glasner said.

"It's not easy against a team like Forest, so overall I'm pleased with the performance today." *—PTI*